The New REPUBLIC

A Journal of Opinion

VOL. LXXXIX NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20, 1937 NUMBER 1155

Contents

The Week 339

Editorials

- The Moroccan Crisis 341
- The Sit-Down 342
- The Shorter Hours Controversy 343
- From Gin to Reality 344

General Articles

- Complaints: I. The Literary Left...Edmund Wilson 345
- Stalin or Satan?...Malcolm Cowley 348
- A New Morgan Thesis...Charles A. Beard 350
- Behind the Motors Strike...George Soule 353
- Tribute to Dr. Machen...Pearl S. Buck 355
- Washington Notes...T. R. B. 356
- Other People's Money...John T. Flynn 357
- Preparing Actors...Stark Young 359
- The Bandwagon 360

Correspondence 360

Books in Review

- Among the Spoilers...Matthew Josephson 362
- Foreshadows of the Present...W. L. Sperry 362
- A Handbook for Marxists...Corliss Lamont 363
- The Gentlemanly Essayist...Conrad Aiken 364
- The Newest Machiavelli...Ralph Rutenber 364
- Synthetic Freedom...Kenneth Burke 365
- Being Dead Is Something...Myra Marini 365
- Books in Brief 365

The Week

MOROCCO became the storm center of the European situation during the week ending January 12. Following reports that large forces of Germans were being landed in Spanish Morocco and formidable fortifications erected, France and Great Britain both took prompt and serious action. There was a heavy concentration of the warships of the two countries in the area around Gibraltar, on the usual excuse of "maneuvers." France sent stern warnings both to the Spanish rebels and to Berlin that she would not accept a Nazi occupation of Morocco, which might threaten her cross-Mediterranean lines. The British prohibited further volunteers for either side in the Spanish civil war and urgently invited the other chief powers to do the same. London observers reported this was a last warning and if it were not respected, it might be followed by a blockade of the entire Spanish coast. On January 11 the tension decreased in a marked degree when Hitler gave a verbal assurance that he would respect Spanish territorial integrity. . . . General Franco's desperate assault on Madrid appeared, at the end of the seven days, to have failed. . . . Trouble broke out between Turks and Arabs in Antioch, Syria; Turkey has appealed to the League for possession of Antioch and Alexandretta, on the ground that the population is mainly Turkish. . . . Reports were current in Washington that a fascist uprising is imminent in Mexico, the revolutionists being financed in part by Americans hostile to the present Mexican regime. . . . As the civilian population of Japan gave continued evidence of anger over the recent results of the army's policy, a growing body of opinion among observers of Chinese affairs held the view that the recent kidnaping of Chiang Kai-shek was not genuine, but a maneuver by the Nanking government, part of a plan for increased resistance to Japanese aggression.

PRESIDENT Roosevelt in two formal messages to Congress and a letter to Speaker Bankhead of the House last week indicated some of the lines of his policy. He opposed a constitutional amendment and pleaded with the courts to take a sufficiently liberal view to permit attainment of New Deal objectives. He promised for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1938, a federal budget practically in balance if no allowance is made for debt retirement and if reëmployment in private industry is large enough to keep federal relief expenditures in the neighborhood of $1,500,000,000. A few days later he asked of Congress an emergency relief appropriation for the next five months of $790,000,000, to permit spending at only slightly less than the present rate. He criticized the tendency of business to lengthen working hours and thereby carry an increased volume of business without an increase in personnel. . . . The two major strikes, those of the General Motors employees and of the maritime workers, continued. . . . The dismissal of Dr. Glenn Frank as president of the University of Wisconsin went through according to schedule, the vote in the Board of Regents being eight to seven. . . . As hope was expressed in some quarters (not including the National Child Labor Committee) that a recent Supreme Court decision had opened the door to prohibiting the products of child labor in interstate commerce and had thereby made a constitutional change unnecessary, Mr. Roosevelt wrote to the Governors of a number of states urging ratification

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the amendment. . . . Nebraska began operations with a one-chamber legislature, the handiwork, primarily, of Senator George W. Norris.

PROPOSALS to regulate child labor through state and federal legislation based on the recent Supreme Court decision upholding the Ashurst-Sumners Act, which makes it illegal to import convict-made goods into a state having a law against their sale, are opposed by the National Child Labor Committee. Its reasons seem to us sound. In the first place, the Committee points out, such legislation would protect only children employed in the productive industries, and do nothing for those in laundries, hotels, restaurants and the like. Second, the legislation would have to be adopted in every state, since none has laws of this kind at present, and the process of pushing it through would be long and difficult. Third, enforcement of such legislation requires that goods be labeled, and while it is relatively easy to require and supervise the labeling of prison-made goods, it would be hugely complicated to do so with goods in which child labor was involved. And even if this could be done, the differences in standards established by the states would present another tangle of difficulties. But the best argument of all against this sort of proposal is that the Child Labor Amendment will take care of the matter much better, and that it has already been ratified by twenty-four states. Its chances for complete ratification seem very good, if it is not obscured by substitute measures, since it will be considered by nineteen states this winter.

EXCITEMENT over the kidnaping of General Chiang Kai-shek and its aftermath has tended to obscure an instance of drastic repression carried out by the Nanking government just before its dictator departed on his fateful trip to Sian. Six of the outstanding intellectual leaders of China, who had been active in the National Liberation Association, were summarily arrested and thrown into prison on November 23, 1936. Their crime was to participate in a campaign for Chinese unity, democratic rights for the Chinese people and more active resistance to Japanese aggression. Those arrested were Shen Chun-lu, dean of the Shanghai Law College and president of the China Bar Association; Chang Nai-ki, author of books on economics; Ansen Chow, author of books on current affairs and editor-in-chief of the daily and weekly publications, Life of the People; Wang Chao-shi, historian and former professor of Political Science in Kwanghua University, Shanghai; Li Kungpo, principal of the Lian Tsai Continuation School and editor of the semi-monthly, Intelligence; and Sa Tsein-li, well known lawyer of Shanghai.

AMONG the minor improvements in American life in recent years has been the hand-set telephone, and we are sorry to report that once again the American public has been paying through the nose for a gadget. Americans have spent $53,240,933 in extra charges for the new type of phone since 1927. But, according to the Federal Communications Commission, the "present worth of ultimate savings in wire plant" created for the Bell system by the hand phone is $85,391,000. In some states the charge to a user of a hand phone has been 25 cents a month, in others 50 cents, in others 15 cents. In some you go right on paying indefinitely, but in others you only pay up to a certain sum. What really bothers us about the whole business, though, is that of course all the people we know in New York City are going to move from the metropolis, where they have paid $21.30 for their hand phones since 1928, to the District of Columbia, Maryland or Virginia, where the fortunate inhabitants only paid $10.75 over the same period. And we want to warn these states that a whole lot of people are going to move to them from Mississippi, where they were rooked out of $42.75. We know this period of migration is going to look pretty silly to future historians, but Alabamans ($40.75), Tennesseeans ($39.65), Kentuckians ($37.75) and plenty of others are obviously going to have to do something.

THE annual publication of government statistics on large incomes has now taken place, no doubt followed by the customary number of domestic squabbles over any possible reason why Husband A does not earn so much as Husband B, and with the usual aftermath of explanations from those in the high brackets that their taxes are simply terrific, and that they are really working just for the government and for the fun of it. W. R. Hearst leads the list with $500,000 as salary, and nobody knows how much more as income on investment. Mae West's perennial invitation to come up and see her sometime has endeared her to the American public to the tune of $480,000 annually. C. W. Guttzeit, president of the Latrobe Electric Steel Company at $398,808, Alfred P. Sloan, president of the General Motors Corporation, at $374,505 and Marlene Dietrich at $368,000 complete the leading five. Others above the three-hundred-thousand mark (in numerical order) include W. R. Sheehan, vice-president of the Twentieth Century-Fox Film Corporation; William C. Knudsen, director and executive vice-president of General Motors; Bing Crosby; Gary Cooper; B. D. Miller, president of the F. W. Woolworth Company. Over the two-hundred-thousand mark were Charles M. Schwab, chairman of the Bethlehem Steel Company; Frank Borzage, movie director; Paul Whiteman; George W. Hill, president of the American Tobacco Company; Thomas J. Watson, president of the International Business Machines Corporation; the late Arthur Brisbane and R. I. Vanderbilt, president of the Vanderbilt Company, Inc. Other handsome salaries include Major Edward Bowes, $114,357; Max Reinhardt, $105,000; Edsel Ford, $100,376; Walter P. Chrysler, $185,543; and Lammot du Pont, $100,199.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FORWARD-LOOKING members of the legal profession throughout the United States are forming the National Lawyers' Guild, which is scheduled to hold its organizational meeting in Washington on February 20, 21 and 22. A constitution will be adopted and permanent officers elected at this meeting. The new organization is pledged to "protect and foster our democratic institutions and the civil rights and liberties of all the people," and its liberal point of view contrasts strikingly with the reactionary policies so often advocated by leaders of established organizations of the bar. In recent years observers have noted an increasing tendency in the legal profession to stratify into a kind of caste system, with lawyers for large business and financial interests at the top of the heap. They frequently control official channels that purportedly speak for the entire profession and have issued pronouncements giving the impression that the American bar as a whole is reactionary and obstructionist in character. The call for the new organization condemns such an impression as "fundamentally false" and says that "through the National Lawyers' Guild the overwhelming majority of American lawyers, now inarticulate, will sound their collective voice."

GOOD news about civil liberties in recent weeks: A National Citizens' Committee for Civil Rights in the Automobile Industry was formed in Detroit to sponsor legal actions contesting such infringements of automobile workers' rights as the anti-picketing injunction recently issued in Flint, Michigan. . . . Miss Jeannette Rankin, former Congresswoman, settled her libel suit against The Macon, Georgia, Evening News out of court, receiving $1,000. A columnist had written that she had "been branded in the courts of Atlanta as being a rank communist," and in Georgia it is libelous to misrepresent a court action. . . . The legislative program of the American Civil Liberties Union in California includes the establishment of an assembly committee to investigate vigilantism, and the repeal of the present criminal-syndicalism law. . . . Bad news: New Jersey's bad record in the current maritime strike was made worse by the beating that thugs in Jersey City gave the Reverend Jay Wright, an observer for the New Jersey Civil Liberties Union, as he was watching police break up picket lines. Four delegations of observers have been mistreated in New Jersey. In Hoboken, police closed the strikers' headquarters and soup kitchen. . . . Despite the fact that The Birmingham, Alabama, Post named Joseph Gelders on its Honor Roll for 1936, and the rest of the press indicated its desire to have his floggers convicted, the Jefferson County Grand Jury again refused to return indictments. Birmingham papers reported that the La Follette Senate Subcommittee on Civil Liberties might investigate. . . . Tear-gas bombs and clubs were used by the police in Flint, Michigan, when they attacked the General Motors sit-in strikers and pickets in an attempt to force them from the Fisher Body plant Number Two.

The Moroccan Crisis

IN THE continuing European crisis, attention last week was suddenly diverted from Spain across the narrow waters of the Mediterranean to Morocco. From British and French sources came the charge that the Germans were landing troops and constructing fortifications in such strength along the shore of Spanish Morocco as to indicate the intention to take over and occupy the country permanently. To this, of course, Britain and France are both violently opposed. Among other reasons, France objects because such action would menace her lines of communication across the Mediterranean, vitally essential for the transport of troops in case of war. Great Britain is against any development that would threaten her own lines of communication through the Mediterranean and the Suez Canal to India and the East. The first reply of the two powers was to rush their fleets to waters in the neighborhood of Gibraltar for "maneuvers"—the greatest assembly of naval strength in one area, it is reported, since the close of the World War.

On January 11, European newspaper correspondents reported with astonishing unanimity that the crisis was over. In a two-minute conversation between Hitler and the French Ambassador each of them pledged his country to respect Spanish territorial integrity. In some quarters it was said that the long awaited calling of Hitler's bluff had at last taken place, and that he was backing down. Whether this is true must remain, however, in the realm of uncertainty. Hitler has made promises before and failed to keep them. There is no doubt that first reports in the French press of the amount of German military activity in Spanish Morocco were somewhat exaggerated. Yet a correspondent of The London Times, writing from Tangier, reports that the French description was premature rather than inaccurate. Preparations are actually being made for a foreign force of 20,000 men. Preliminaries for the fortification of Ceuta are going on. There is a German naval base at Melilla and an air base at Tetuan. Huge quantities of iron ore from the Riff are going to Germany in merchant ships of the Reich. For the moment, it may suit French plans to pretend that Hitler's assurances are sufficient; but unless he actually executes a right-about-face, the problem is sure to arise again in a more acute form.

The week's developments sent many minds back to the striking parallel of the Agadir incident of 1911. It will be remembered that France, Italy and Germany had all been seeking North African territory eagerly ever since it became apparent that the hold of Turkey was weakening. In the early days of the century, Germany had worked for a foothold on the African coast of the Mediterranean and another on the Atlantic coast of Morocco. To these projects both Italy and France vigorously objected. France was continuing to extend her influence in Morocco and in July, 1911, Kaiser Wilhelm sent the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

gunboat "Panther" to Agadir as a concrete expression of his resentment over the further continuation of these encroachments. For a short time, Europe hovered on the brink of that general war that was to come thirty-seven months later. Great Britain saved the day by coming to the support of France, and Germany reluctantly agreed to the French protectorate. Germany, through the Kaiser's action, did, however, win two important concessions: territory taken from the French Congo, and a reaffirmation of the principle of equal economic opportunity. From that time, North Africa has continued to be a battleground for conflicting imperial ambitions, with Spain, France and Italy the chief contestants during the past twenty years.

Before the famous two-minute conversation in Berlin, the immediate question was, of course, whether Hitler's intention is actually to hold territory in North Africa, or merely to blackmail France and England into making large grants of colonies elsewhere. The Germans have always insisted that in 1911 the Kaiser was only employing blackmail of this sort, and they have been quick to press the analogy. Explanations from Berlin over the week-end of January 10 were about equally divided between protestations that the reports of German troops in Spanish Morocco were false and assertions that while there was some truth in them, German ambitions can readily be satisfied by concessions in other parts of the world. There is of course a technical difference between troops of the German army and "volunteers" in Franco's service.

Some European observers believe that Great Britain, with the support of France, is at last preparing to call the bluff of the dictators, and Hitler's in particular. Under this theory, Britain's action in prohibiting her citizens to volunteer on either side in the Spanish "little world war," and her invitation to the other powers to do the same, is really a last warning. If it is not accepted in the near future, a blockade of Spain will be established by Britain, presumably with French coöperation.

What will be the outcome of the present situation is unpredictable. The chief fact that now emerges is that each country is working primarily in its own interest, or what it conceives to be that interest. While it is nominally true that Germany and Italy are arrayed on one side, France and Great Britain on the other, the connection is a tenuous one. It is obvious that Mussolini is concerned over the prospect of a permanent German establishment in Spain or Morocco or both. France is strongly sympathetic, at least in theory, with the loyalist government of Spain, but clings to Great Britain because she regards the aid of that country as a *sine qua non* in the war with Germany which she regards as a probability of the next few years. As for Hitler, we doubt whether he knows exactly what he wants in the Spanish affair or is working in accordance with any clear-cut plan. Reports from Berlin that he has told Franco to capture Madrid in the next fortnight or see German aid withdrawn are not incompatible with the known facts. Whatever may be his ultimate intentions, the last thing in the world that he wants is an immediate war with Great Britain and France. Yet, regardless of the course of events in Morocco, his ambitions are of a sort that, in the long run, still seem likely to produce a war unless they are checked by policies of the other powers sweepingly different from anything undertaken in the past.

The Sit-Down

AT THE moment of writing, the one issue that has prevented a conference between the heads of the General Motors Corporation and the leaders of the United Automobile Workers is the "sit-down," or the presence of the strikers in the plants. Feverish activity of mediators has ironed out every other objection of either side to talking over their differences. But the company executives will not discuss with the union the aims of the men in going on strike until this particular method of carrying it on is abandoned. And the union will not order the men to abandon it unless safeguards are granted. Whatever the near future may bring in the way of conciliation, the situation bears witness to the significance of this particular kind of tactics. Why should it be considered so important by both sides?

The traditional way of carrying on a strike is of course for the employees to leave the plant and not to come back to work. Pickets are then sent to the plant gates to persuade others from taking the places of the strikers. In the General Motors and other recent strikes, the procedure has been for the men to remain in the plants without working. In doing so they are not destructive; they take good care of the machinery; they amuse themselves with radios, games and impromptu performances; they ceremoniously punch the time clocks at the proper times to symbolize the fact that they still consider themselves employees. Food and other supplies are brought to them by their families or by other union members. This form of strike also involves picketing the gates, to see that people do not enter without legitimate business.

One of the first acts of General Motors in this strike was to obtain a court order which not only contained all the usual drastic prohibitions familiar in labor injunctions, but also commanded the men to leave the plant, on the ground that they were trespassers. The sheriff tried to read the injunction to the men and was greeted with uproarious laughter. He could have enforced the order only by a pitched battle. That he did not do. This particular effort of an employer to use the law against the sit-down is also somewhat blemished by the fact that President Homer Martin of the union has asked the state legislature to impeach Judge Edward D. Black, who issued the injunction, on the ground that he owns about 3,665 shares of General Motors stock. A Michigan law reads: "No judge of any court shall sit as such in any cause or proceeding

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in which he is a party or in which he is interested. . . ."

The advantages of the sit-down to the union are sufficiently obvious to anyone familiar with strike tactics. In order to operate the machinery with strikebreakers it is necessary for the employer to get the strikers out of the building. What may under certain circumstances be even more important in terms of morale, it is necessary to get them out even to create the impression that the machinery is being operated, or not improperly operated. In an ordinary strike the first necessity is merely to convoy strikebreakers in sufficient numbers past the plant gates. But it is more difficult to get unwilling men out of a building than it is to disperse pickets from a certain area in the street. The violence involved, even if the operation should be successful, would be more likely to endanger the company's property. Moreover, it is not so easy in such a case to maintain that the strikers are the aggressors, so far as the use of violence is concerned. The ordinary technique of the strikebreaking agency, which involves the use of gangsters, machine guns and tear gas, is not adequate to the new situation. In addition, the solidarity of the strikers is more easily maintained while they are continually together than if they were scattered except for periodic meetings or strike duty.

The clear advantage of the situation to the union is what lies behind its stipulation that the strikers will not leave unless the company will engage not to try to operate the plant or to move machinery elsewhere while negotiations are going on. The fact that the company has not agreed to these conditions probably confirms in the union leaders' minds the suspicion that the company's real objection is to the very effectiveness of the tactic. If it were abandoned the company might try to break the strike by the usual methods, even during peaceful negotiations.

The company, of course, rests its objection on grounds of high legal principle. The sit-down strikers are trespassers on property that does not belong to them; they are disobeying a court order to vacate; the company will not countenance unlawful conduct by negotiating with lawbreakers. People do get excited about principles in combat situations, and it is unfair to accuse the employers of being consciously insincere in this plea. They are counting, too, on the possibility of arousing hostility to the strikers by stimulating the public to share their righteous indignation. Such hostility might make it less undiplomatic to use the violence necessary to eject the strikers. But it would be unfortunate if a deadlock over the manner of conducting a dispute should indefinitely prolong the dispute itself, while the major issues that gave rise to the controversy are lost to sight. General Motors and the union both profess to be willing to talk with each other about the grievances that the strike was called to remedy. Undue technicality in getting down to this business will be sure to suggest that the party who raises the most objections isn't anxious for settlement.

The Shorter Hours Debate

THE NEXT great controversy about labor conditions in the United States apparently will turn about the question of weekly hours of work. The railroad unions are pressing for a thirty-hour week; it is one of the demands of the striking automobile workers; the miners want it; the labor movement as a whole remembers the Black bill for a thirty-hour week, which preceded the NRA, and if Congress should be able to assert any constitutional power over hours, this goal will undoubtedly be sought.

Labor's struggle for shorter hours is a time-honored and strikingly successful one. Little by little it has progressed from seventy-two and sixty hours, and from the seven-day week in certain industries, to fifty-four, forty-eight, forty-four and finally, in some cases, to forty hours and the five-day week. These gains are tangible and relatively permanent, no matter what may happen, under the vicissitudes of our economic order, to wages, employment and other conditions.

There is, however, a great deal of doubt even among progressive economists whether under existing conditions a still further shortening of hours will not yield diminishing returns to labor itself. There is little question that those in the rear of the procession ought to be brought forward. But when we consider a working week materially shorter than forty hours, danger signals are seen. It may be worth while, without going into the matter in great detail, to state a few general principles worthy of consideration.

Previous efforts to shorten hours of work have been combatted on the ground that they would diminish production and hence would reduce the means of life for everyone, including the workers. Another way of stating the same argument was to say that shorter hours would so raise costs of production as to reduce the total of employment opportunities. This argument has proved fallacious in the long run because with shorter hours and the consequent diminution of fatigue, more efficient work resulted and the output per worker did not suffer. But such an offset becomes less and less possible, the shorter the hours become.

If we have at last reached the point where shorter hours are not accompanied by a lessening of fatigue and a consequent gain in efficiency, there remains a theoretical choice for labor between goods and leisure. Is it desirable to have more and better food, housing, clothing, automobiles and amusement, or to have more idle time? This is a choice that is difficult to make; it involves conflicting values. But it is pretty clear that even if we had full employment at a forty-hour week, we could not under our present state of technique and industrial organization produce what would be required to provide even a moderately good standard of living for everyone. As technique advances we may some day be able to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

do so. We might be able to do so even now if industry as a whole were more efficiently managed for social ends.

These are not the considerations that are uppermost in the minds of workers. The great strength of the movement for shorter hours lies in the belief that it will increase employment. If it takes ten workers at forty hours to turn out a given amount of product, will it not take thirteen or more workers at thirty hours? This seems axiomatic, and little thought is given to further aspects of the problem. The desire to abolish unemployment is so strong that other matters do not seem to count for much.

There is, however, a grave question whether the end sought can be achieved by this simple means. If we assume that there is a fixed total of employment to be had, then of course it can be shared among more people if each works a shorter time. But if, as is usually the case, shorter weekly hours are not accompanied by correspondingly smaller weekly wages, then the hourly wage goes up, costs of production go up and prices are likely to go up too. It may easily turn out that fewer goods are sold at these higher prices and that the total of employment is correspondingly diminished. It might, of course, be theoretically possible to raise hourly wages and labor costs without increasing prices. Full production under the best attainable social management might make this possible. But labor cannot bring about such a desirable result by controlling hours and wages alone. That would require social control of prices and production as well, under skillful economic planning for the whole industrial order. And we are far from having that.

If industry wishes to divert the present urge for shorter hours, its best means of doing so is to exert itself to increase employment. Labor can scarcely be blamed for its attitude, under existing conditions. The demand for a thirty-hour week, which really is mainly a demand for job security, is in its broadest aspect a challenge to those who govern our economic life to see that every competent person has an opportunity to earn his living. If everyone had that opportunity, the economists' reasoning might gain a more attentive hearing among the workers.

From Gin to Reality

CHRISTMAS vacation is the open season for youth congresses. This year two important meetings were held: the American Student Union celebrated its first birthday at a convention in Chicago, and the National Student Federation of America, made up of the student councils of 110 colleges, met in New York City. The Federation, with a weak internal structure and a fairly conservative membership, passed a list of resolutions showing that even the rightest student groups are much farther to the Left than they were a few years ago.

The resolutions of the Federation give a pretty good picture of what the students on the 110 represented campuses are willing to swallow without blinking, because the Federation delegates are skilled campus politicians who know what their classmates want, and have no desire to go home and have to do a lot of explaining. And yet the Federation voted to obtain contributions for the aid of German refugee students; to support the principles of the American Youth Act; not to participate in any war fought outside our continental borders; to seek the abolition of loyalty oaths and sedition bills; to make the ROTC optional; and to seek the reinstatement of Jerome Davis at Yale. The American Student Union, which does not have to be as cagey in wording the resolutions it adopts, reaffirmed the vigorous platform it adopted last year, which includes the "Oxford Pledge" against participation in any war conducted by the United States. It is unfortunate that this pledge fails to discriminate between international and civil war. We are sure that a majority of the Student Union members who have taken the pledge would be willing to fight with the government against a fascist uprising in the United States, even though they have promised in advance not to do so.

The Student Union voted to repeat this spring its dramatic national one-day strike against war; protested President Roosevelt's embargo against both sides in the Spanish civil war, and pledged itself to a one-year drive to make the American campus a "closed shop" and to build the Union's membership to 50,000 (from 20,000). Whether this means that the Student Union is going to engage in a fight with the Federation for control of the campus we do not know. Certainly their functions are sufficiently distinct to permit the existence of both groups. The student movement, like the labor movement, is far too weak in relation to the forces it has to oppose to waste any energy in internecine warfare. What is really encouraging about these conventions is the indication they show that the youth of America—after a gloomy period in which Gin and Necking seemed to be All—may be able to cope at least in some measure with the tangle of problems we are about to hand over to them.

THE NEW REPUBLIC

PUBLISHED WEEKLY AND COPYRIGHT, 1937, IN THE U. S., BY EDITORIAL PUBLICATIONS, INC., 40 EAST 49TH STREET, NEW YORK.

EDITORS

BRUCE BLIVEN MALCOLM COWLEY R. M. LOVETT
GEORGE SOULE STARK YOUNG

TREASURER: DANIEL MEBANE

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

HAMILTON BASSO H. N. BRAILSFORD LEWIS MUMFORD
JOHN T. FLYNN WALDO FRANK E. C. LINDEMAN
W. P. MANGOLD JON. MITCHELL JOHN DEWEY
REXFORD G. TUGWELL

RATES: SINGLE COPIES, FIFTEEN CENTS; YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION, FIVE DOLLARS; CANADIAN, FIVE DOLLARS AND FIFTY CENTS; FOREIGN, SIX DOLLARS; THREE MONTHS' TRIAL, ONE DOLLAR.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Complaints: I. The Literary Left

I QUOTE the following from Maurice Baring's "Outline of Russian Literature," written before the Russian Revolution:

> The didactic stamp which he [Belinsky] gave to Russian esthetic and literary criticism has remained on it ever since, and differentiates it from the literary and esthetic criticism of the rest of Europe, not only from that school of criticism which wrote and writes exclusively under the banner of "Art for Art's Sake," but from those Western critics who championed the importance of moral ideas in literature, just as ardently as he did himself, and who deprecated the theory of Art for Art's Sake just as strongly. Thus it is that, from the beginning of Russian criticism down to the present day, a truly objective criticism scarcely exists in Russian literature. Esthetic criticism becomes a political weapon. "Are you in my camp?" if so, you are a good writer. "Are you in my opponent's camp?" Then your god-gifted genius is mere dross.
>
> The reason of this has been luminously stated by Professor Bruckner: "To the intelligent Russian, without a free press, without the liberty of assembly, without the right to free expression of opinion, literature became the last refuge of freedom of thought, the only means of propagating higher ideas. He expected of his country's literature not merely esthetic recreation; he placed it at the service of his aspirations. . . . Hence the striking partiality, nay unfairness, displayed by the Russians toward the most perfect works of their own literature, when they did not respond to the aims or expectations of their party or their day. . . ."
>
> Herein lies the great difference between the Russian and Western critics, between Sainte-Beuve and Belinsky; between Matthew Arnold and his Russian contemporaries. Matthew Arnold defined the highest poetry as being a criticism of life; but that would not have prevented him from doing justice either to a poet so polemical as Byron, or to a poet so completely unpolitical, so sheerly esthetic as Keats; to Lord Beaconsfield as a novelist, to Mr. Morley or Lord Acton as historians, because their "tendency" or their "politics" were different from his own. The most biased of English or French critics is broadminded compared to a Russian critic. Had Keats been a Russian poet, Belinsky would have swept him away with contempt; Wordsworth would have been condemned as reactionary; and Swinburne's politics alone would have been taken into consideration. At the present day, almost ten years after Professor Bruckner wrote his "History of Russian Literature," now that the press is more or less free, save for occasional pin-pricks, now that literary output is in any case unfettered, and the stage freer than it is in England, the same criticism still applies. Russian criticism is still journalistic. There are and there always have been brilliant exceptions . . . but as a rule the political camp to which the writer belongs is the all-important question; and I know cases of Russian politicians who had been known to refuse to write, even in foreign reviews, because they disapproved of the "tendency" of those reviews, the tendency being non-existent—as is generally the case with English reviews—and the review harboring opinions of every shade and tendency. You would think that narrow-mindedness could no further go than to refuse to let your work appear in an impartial organ, lest in that same organ an opinion opposed to your own might appear also. But the cause of this is the same now as it used to be, namely that, in spite of there being a greater measure of freedom in Russia, political liberty does not yet exist; liberty of conscience only partially exists; the press is annoyed and hampered by restrictions; and the great majority of Russian writers are still engaged in fighting for these things, and therefore still ready to sacrifice fairness for the greater end—the achievement of political freedom.

Russian literary criticism, then, runs to party politics, just as French criticism runs to ideas; and this tendency has probably been intensified since the Marxist revolution. At any rate, it has penetrated through the Communist movement to the criticism of other countries. We have been suffering in America for a long time, in the critical writing of the Left, from a virulent infection with it. It is not merely a question of criticism written from a social point of view, or even of Marxist criticism; but of criticism dominated by the quarrels of Russian factional politics.

And this tendency has come lately to raise more of an issue, due to the turn which Stalinism has been taking. As Stalin has been having more and more trouble with his political enemies and has been resorting to more and more violent methods of silencing them, the literary criticism of the Stalinist press has become, not more perhaps, but more conspicuously, diverted from its proper objects to playing the role of special pleader for Stalin. There was a time when literary Communists were few and when they were the spokesmen for a most important point of view which had hardly got into the liberal weeklies, let alone the old family monthlies. One could count on Michael Gold, for example, to stand outside the bourgeois literary world and to give its illusions no quarter. But today, when half that world has turned leftist, the Communist point of view is no longer a rarity, and we have a right to call its exponents to account.

One of the worst drawbacks of being a Stalinist at the present time is that you have to defend so many falsehoods. Not only has the whole role of Trotsky been travestied or suppressed to suit Stalin's purpose, but, on account of Lenin's relations with Trotsky and his criticisms of and conflicts with Stalin, it has been made impossible to write a real biography of Lenin or even to publish his later correspondence. The great Marxist scholar Ryazanov, the head of the Marx-Engels Institute and the col-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lector and editor of the complete Marx and Engels, whose only sin in the field of Marxist research had been a too zealous desire to justify Marx against any possible kind of criticism, was never allowed to finish his work but sent to die in prison, on political charges of which one of the most serious seems to have been his failure to feature Stalin sufficiently in his commentary. The trials which have followed the assassination of Kirov have thrown up a nightmare structure of accusations and imputations—including the assertion, strange for a socialist government, that the defendants had "lost the characteristics of human beings"—in which it is difficult to separate the true from the false but of which a good deal must certainly be false; and the condemnation of Zinoviev and Kamenev has involved the further rewriting of history at their expense. The death of Gorky and the recent imprisonment of Radek, already himself badly compromised by his compliance under pressure with the official myths, were like the extinction of the last sparks of intellectual light connected with the Stalinist dictatorship.

This is not to disparage the executive abilities of Stalin or the practical achievements of the Soviets under his leadership; both have been done ample justice in these pages by various writers, including the present one. But a political group which adopts as a policy the suppression of opinion and the falsification of history on the scale and with the unscrupulousness of the Stalinists is hardly a beneficent influence for the production of literature or ideas. I cannot see that the new United Front is making a bit of difference. This change in the Communist tactics has coincided with a period of bitter struggle between Stalin and his political opponents and with a tightening of the terror; and, under the anxious affability of the Communist literati toward writers who do not seem likely to offend because they know nothing about communism at all, there appears, as soon as any criticism of Stalinism is suggested, the nervousness, which now seems verging on panic, of the satellites of a jealous boss who does not brook the least doubt or disrespect. One is shocked to find writers whom one has known before as sober and conscientious reviewers quoting passages out of their context in such a way as to give them a false meaning, inventing passages which do not exist, trumping up counter-revolutionary charges and misrepresenting the author's plain drift in a way that implies not necessarily deliberate dishonesty but rather an actual misreading of the text, due to the influence of fixed ideas. The Stalinist intelligentsia at the present time are like chickens mesmerized by a chalk-line: they stand paralyzed with their beaks pointing the line, they cannot look away from the line, and at the end of the line there is nothing.

It is therefore now, it seems to me, pretty difficult to hope that any intellectual health will ever come out of Stalinist Communism. It is the old question of gathering figs from thistles—and what is that fable of Krylov's about how the young will never be corrected where the old are equally to blame? How can you expect the pupils to report accurately on the contents of the books they review when the masters are corrupting whole libraries? Stalinist criticism, then, is doubly suspect: in being Stalinist and in being Russian. As for the Trotskyists, they are often more intelligent, and they are freer to think and to say what they think. But they also suffer from the Russian defects in being the obverse of the Stalinist coin. They, too, tend to turn everything into a factional issue and are likely to proceed to a literary discussion with all the polemics of a party unmasking. The whole thing reached a high pitch of comedy the other day—in the general journalistic field—when a writer in The New Masses, on the evidence of an editorial in The Nation on the subject of the Zinoviev trials and the signature of two Nation editors to a petition intended to procure for Trotsky the right of self-defense, made an effort to force The Nation to acknowledge itself a Trotskyist sheet, "the organ of a band of counter-revolutionary conspirators and assassins"; while at the very same moment a writer in The Modern Monthly tried to represent The New Republic as Stalinist. From the point of view of the Communist groups, the whole world of the political Left is divided into Stalinist, Trotskyist and Lovestonite, and it seems absolutely inconceivable to them that it is possible for anyone not to belong to one or another.

Now all this is straight Russian and would make no sense in the United States even if the politics involved were not Russian. Mr. Baring in the passage I have quoted does no doubt exaggerate a little in speaking of English reviews which have no political tendency at all; yet it is certain that the tendencies represented by The Nation and The New Republic are of a general non-factional kind. In respect to literary criticism particularly, we have never developed the fierce partisanship of the Russians because we have never, except locally or temporarily, been in the same situation as they. We can leave party politics out of our literary discussion and even out of our political discussion because we are free to write editorials and make speeches as the Russians were never able to do. The Russian kind of thing is quite alien to both the English and the American traditions. The great English critics like Johnson and Coleridge have been men of wide range and independent judgment. They had strong political opinions; and Johnson has been accused of allowing his to bias his literary judgments—in the case of Milton, for example. But Johnson on Milton seems magnanimous appreciation if we compare it with, say, Joseph Freeman on Trotsky's "History of the Russian Revolution" or on the later paintings of Diego Rivera. And even the American social critics, Parrington and Van Wyck Brooks, though their direction is firm and unmistakable, are never partisans in the Russian sense. It is silly for Communist literary men to play at living in a world where they are the spokesmen of underground parties which depend on their writings for agitation—

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

or in a world in which their party has seized power and is in a position to excommunicate and suppress. (For the Russian revolutionaries persisted, even after their victory, in regarding literature and art as branches of party politics. Hence the attempts of repressive literary groups like RAPP to invest themselves with official authority, and the continual meddling of the government, as in the Shostakovich incident, with the natural development of the arts. A revolutionary dictatorship, unsure of its position, can hardly be expected to countenance direct counter-revolutionary propaganda, but the relation at the present time between the Soviet government and Soviet literature is something specifically Russian which would be as abnormal as it is unnecessary elsewhere. In all the pother that we have been hearing lately about the right and the wrong party line in literature, it never seems to have occurred to anybody to say: "Party lines in literature are all rubbish! Literature will get along quite well without the interference or guidance of even the most brilliant politicians. Even a socialist government will have concerned itself quite enough with these matters when it has secured for the public interest the profits of the publishing business." The contrary policy in Russia has resulted in a situation where not only are the writers and artists prohibited from any criticism of the administration, but they are always in danger of being suddenly pilloried and told, as in the case of poor Shostakovich, that they will have to change their style of writing as they are not supplying tunes that can be hummed by the members of the administration.)

This tendency is also quite alien to the practice of Marx and Engels, who in general enjoyed art for what it was worth and pursued their political-economic analysis, even when applied to art, as something belonging to a different department. And even Lenin, who was troubled by the exaltation he got from Beethoven because it made him forget the miseries of society, manifested in his contacts with literature no such pettiness of party solicitude—see his attitude toward Gorky, for example—as the intellectuals that speak in his name.

The real problem has been stated by Louis Kronenberger in an article in The Partisan Review:

> There is really no fundamental dilemma [he says]. It is more necessary for us to interest ourselves in an important subject treated without much merit than in an unimportant subject treated with considerable merit. *Culture herself* demands that we put the right social values ahead of the right literary values; and whenever we encounter people who want to keep art dustproof, who bewail the collapse of "esthetic values," it is our duty to ascertain just how far their indignation is a screen for reactionary and unsocial thinking.
>
> The obverse of this—which is the cultural coarsening inevitable to a period of stress—is on the other hand a very serious problem for the critic. As men of thought tend increasingly to approximate the psychology of men of action, as the business of saving civilization increasingly ousts from their minds the idea of enriching it, there must follow all along the line a relaxation of standards, both ethical and esthetic. The amenities decline, the non-utilitarian aspects of culture decrease, tolerance ceases to be feasible, and reason to be altogether sufficient. It is less important that the search for truth should survive than that the cancers of society should be cut out; but it is important enough. The critic therefore must act with a full sense of authority and responsibility toward what, when the crisis is over, we shall want to come back to; culture of that kind is like a cathedral where, just now, we cannot often pray but which we must preserve from bombardment. And culture of that kind has its uses in any program of protest. It must not stop men from fighting to restore order to the world, but it may give them a sense of what order signifies and stands for.

Mr. Kronenberger has attacked this subject with a good deal more seriousness and candor than it usually gets in that quarter (I take it that The Partisan Review is directed by Stalinist Communists); but it seems to me that he still leaves things somewhat unclear. How would you behave precisely in order to do what Mr. Kronenberger proposes? Mr. Kronenberger works on Fortune, writes book reviews for The Nation, translates LaRochefoucauld and edits anthologies of light verse and of English eighteenth-century literature. Does this fill the bill?—or what? What precisely is involved in the "relaxation of standards, both ethical and esthetic"? At what point does the "search for truth," which is "important enough," become less important than "that the cancers of society should be cut out"? Does this mean that it is all right to assert on the word of the Stalin administration that Trotsky has been working through the Nazis to assassinate the Soviet leaders and that Trotsky is a species of fascist? Or does it mean merely that it is all right to misrepresent the contents of a book which contains criticism of Stalin? Or does it mean merely that we may "put the right social values ahead of the right literary values"? And does this mean that in your role of book reviewer you ought to caricature a good novel by Hemingway or Wilder and glorify an indifferent one about a textile strike? Or merely that you ought to neglect the one and respectfully notice the other?—The root of the difficulty here may be seen, in the passage I have just quoted, in Mr. Kronenberger's use of the word "right." What he really ought to arrive at is a point of view from which it would be possible for him to say that for himself certain things are right and certain other things are wrong. But he is only able to get so far as to assert that culture herself demands that social values be put ahead of literary values, and yet at the same time to talk about them both as "right." Right for whom, doing what? How can you take part in the civil war and at the same time preserve the cathedral?

The times, it is true, are confusing. Certainly it is hard for people to know what to do. But one thing that is certainly not worth doing is formulating theoretical positions. One has to decide in what capacity one is going to function. And from the moment one is not functioning as an organizer or as

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

an active politician (which includes agitational literature), one must work in good faith in one's field. A conviction that is genuine will always come through—that is, if one's work is sound, it will. You may say, This is no time for art or science: the enemy is at the gate! But in that case you should be at the gate: in the Spanish International Brigade, for example, rather than engaged in literary work. There is no sense in pursuing a literary career under the impression that one is operating a bombing plane. On the one hand, imaginary bombs kill no actual enemies; and, on the other, the development of a war psychology prevents one's real work from having value. When you "relax the esthetic and ethical standards," you abandon the discipline itself of your craft. EDMUND WILSON.

In the article that follows, Malcolm Cowley discusses the same subject from a different point of view.—THE EDITORS.

Stalin or Satan?

WITH THE principal conclusions reached by Edmund Wilson in the course of his attack on the American left-wing writers, one could scarcely fail to agree. It is true, for example, that criticism here has been infected by Russian factional politics (though the infection is less widespread or virulent than Wilson makes it seem). It is true, and this time unreservedly, that we have to work at our own problems and write our own answers without trying to copy them from the bright boys in Moscow or Mexico or Paris. Finally it is true that critics and novelists have to defend the highest standards of their craft, even in times of social crisis; as writers they simply cannot afford the illusion of being armed soldiers or airplane bombers in a new crusade against the infidel. All these literary points are sound and timely. But Wilson is a great deal less convincing in his deviations from literature into revolutionary politics; and it seems to me that even his literary conclusions are weakened and misdirected by a sort of political ambiguity.

When he says that "Stalinist criticism" in this country "is doubly suspect in being Stalinist and in being Russian," he sounds very exact and forthright —but just what does he mean by Stalinist criticism? When he tells us that "the Stalinist intelligentsia at the present time are like chickens mesmerized by a chalk line," just how does he recognize the chickens and distinguish them from the rest of the barnyard fowl? Wilson never really clarifies his use of words like "Stalinist" and "Stalinism." They have at least two meanings, narrow and broad, and neither of these can be understood without some reference to the international situation as a whole—not merely Russian politics since 1927, a subject that Wilson features in sharp detail, but also the general fear of war and the attitudes toward revolution or evolution of progressive people all over the world.

Two of these attitudes or systems of ideas are at present in sharp conflict. Both of them start with the proposition that the Russian Revolution is the central event of modern times and that its fruits must be preserved. But the first system, which developed out of opposition to the present policies of the Soviet government, holds that the revolution is threatened chiefly *from within*. The real danger is a pernicious reaction like that which followed the death of Robespierre in 1794. The heart of this Thermidorean reaction is the dictator, Stalin, and the central question is how to reverse his policies and return to those of Lenin. At this point the moderate supporters of the first system stop short. The extremists, on the other hand, are so obsessed with hatred of Stalin that everything else in the world becomes subordinated to the problem of defeating him. Events like the Spanish civil war, the People's Front in France, the German-Japanese alliance are important merely as new illustrations of Stalin's disastrous policy. At times these extremists seem to transform the Marxian dialectic into a doctrine of personal diabolism. Stalin—or is it Satan?—becomes to them an incarnate principle of cruelty and stupidity, of evil unmitigated and almost omnipresent, so that he can poison the pen of a woman novelist in Aberdeen, Washington, censor the editorials of independent journals in New York City and cause the loss of battles in the far interior of China. I can almost imagine them dreaming that Stalin is hidden under the bed, in the shape of a big black tomcat. During their waking hours they call for an insurrection in Russia and day-dream about the seizure of power—after which they will immediately proceed to the world revolution. But in preaching this crusade they find themselves with most unwelcome allies—namely, with those who want an insurrection in Russia so that they can bring back the Tsar, steal the factories and wheatfields of the Ukraine, and so end the dream of a world revolution forever.

The second system has many more adherents. They may or may not approve of everything that is happening in the Soviet Union, and some of them may be strongly opposed to given acts or tendencies —to the new abortion law, for example, or to the emphasis on popular art as against formal art. But they agree among themselves that the Russians will have to solve their internal problems in their own fashion; the real danger to the revolution is *from without*. Specifically the revolution is threatened by the alliance lately formed among the fascist powers with the aim not only of seizing Russian territory in Europe and Asia, but also of defeating popular governments wherever they may be established. The best way of fighting this danger is to unite the democratic forces inside each nation and to encourage an alliance of the more or less democratic governments. The Soviets, meanwhile, must develop their industrial and military resources until they are safe against attack. . . . To those who hold this point of view, the personal character of Stalin

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

may seem relatively unimportant. Many of the policies for which he is praised or execrated may be regarded as the inevitable result of any effort to unify and strengthen the Soviet Union in the face of an international fascist alliance. But the second system also has its extremists. They are the men to whom the general secretary of the Communist Party of the USSR is always "Comrade Stalin, leader of the toiling masses," or "the all-seeing eye of Stalin," or "Stalin, who knows so well how to checkmate the plots of the counter-revolutionary Trotskyite *saboteurs* and conspirators." They are in large part the men who depend on Stalin's favor for their jobs.

Now, in all this array of moderates and extremists on two sides, just where are the Stalinists whom Wilson is attacking? Does the word apply to anyone who believes that the Russian revolution is threatened from without and that it can best be defended by an alliance among the democratic nations? Does it apply to anyone who is willing to coöperate with the Third International (or the Second or the Fifth) so long as it seems to be working in a generally desirable direction? In that case, Wilson's statements about the Stalinists are strained and violent beyond reason. But does he apply the word only to those who profess a blind personal loyalty to Stalin and his policies? In that case there are few Stalinists in this country—and there are so very few of them among critics or novelists that Wilson seems to be waging his entire campaign against Joseph Freeman of The New Masses (who in turn does not hold many of the beliefs thus ascribed to him). The real point is that Wilson uses the word in both senses, sometimes narrow and sometimes broad, and thereby lends his influence to one of the sides in a controversy which he thoroughly deplores.

For "Stalinist" is really an epithet, of vague but highly emotional and invidious meaning, invented by Stalin's enemies partly as a means of confusing the issue.[1] The word makes it seem, for example, that the Soviet Union is ruled by a small fanatical group of theorists. It makes it seem that anybody who agrees with the Communists on one point must accept the label and be ready to defend every single policy of the Russian government. ("So you support a farmer-labor party?" I heard one extremist say. "Then you're a Stalinist. Tell me"—shaking his forefinger—"tell me just how would you justify the suppression of Shostakovich's operas?") More importantly, the epithet makes it seem that "Stalinism," "Trotskyism," "Lovestoneism" and all other policies with similar names are roughly equivalent in world importance—so that a group of intellectuals in Dayton or Dubuque can measure themselves gravely and complacently against the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, pointing out how all its errors would have been avoided if "we," the Smithites or Jonesites or Gitlowites, had been at the head of the government instead of our rivals the eternally blundering Stalinists. And the same happy word offers a refined but effective way of saying that one's opponent is a dirty Communist and a public menace —so that the person using it has the simultaneous pleasure of being a Red-baiter and yet more revolutionary in his heart than the Reds he is attacking.

There is simply no possibility that a critic as honest as Wilson would put the word to this ambiguous purpose. As a matter of fact he ridicules the careless use of it by others, saying it is silly to think that the world of the left is completely divided into Stalinist, Trotskyist and Lovestoneist factions, or that The New Republic and The Nation are respectively organs of Stalin and Trotsky. He condemns all factions for their factionalism, but he condemns the Stalinists a great deal more than the others—and in the course of his argument he begins to use this epithet in such a broad condemnatory fashion that you wonder whether he too isn't confusing Stalinism with the subtle works of Satan.

This is especially true at the end of his article, when he discusses two paragraphs by Louis Kronenberger. Just why does he assume that they appeared in an organ "directed by Stalinist Communists"? Is it because the editors of The Partisan Review are generally sympathetic to the Communist Party? Does this mean that the word applies to all other sympathizers of the Communist Party, and that no intellectual health is likely to come out of them individually or collectively? Why should he be surprised at finding seriousness and candor "in that quarter"?—and I ask the question because several articles that I happened to read in The Partisan Review were distinguished by these two qualities. When we come to Louis Kronenberger himself, the questions are still more complicated. Did he become a Stalinist merely by contributing to a magazine edited by people friendly to the Communist Party—acquiring the virulent infection from his proofsheets? Or was he already a Stalinist while concealing the disease from his friends? Or, to give a third hypothesis, is he one of the sheep with wool pulled over their eyes—"the writers who do not seem likely to offend because they know nothing about communism at all"? Of course Wilson might say that he was not even thinking of Stalinism in connection with Kronenberger—but in that case why does he devote so much space to him, and to no one else, in this particular context? And why does he want to make him assume a partial responsibility for all the crimes of suppression and distortion that Wilson imputes to Stalinists in general?—asking him, for example, whether it is right to assert that Trotsky is a species of fascist or to misrepresent the contents of a book which contains criticism of Stalin. If Kronenberger answered No, quite simply, should that be taken as an admission of former guilt? Does he still beat his wife?

My general impression of Wilson's article is that he wants to attack certain evils in American left-wing writing, but that he has adopted a method

[1] In Russia the companion epithet of "Trotskyite" is often used in the same loose and obfuscatory fashion. But in this country—and in Wilson's article—it is almost always applied to the actual followers of Trotsky.—M. C.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

quite likely to make them worse instead of better. He protests against our being hypnotized by Russian politics—but he makes his protest in an article full of Russian politics, and one that describes them in a fashion so one-sided and provocative that it cannot fail to start a dozen arguments for every one it settles. He abominates the political quarrelsomeness of writers in this country—but he attacks it in an article that is neither completely free of the faults that he deplores nor at all calculated to cure them in others. The results of his factionalism to end factionalism may be the same as those of another Wilson's war to end war.

I suggest that there is a better way, not of ending these arguments completely—for I am not at all sure that would be desirable—but of keeping them in their proper place and seeing that they do not interfere with an intelligent course of action. There are a number of immediate purposes on which most progressive people can agree—for example, to support the popular government in Spain, to help in the formation of an American farmer-labor party, to encourage the organizing campaign in steel (and the automobile strikers), to prevent the Federal Works of Art Project from being abandoned and its work wasted. In all these matters—and in many more besides—it seems to me that men of reasonably good intentions can coöperate even though their political creeds may differ. If they are literary men, they might also discuss the question whether they can be of any help in these movements *as writers,* or whether they should act merely as men and citizens. But they can discuss without ceasing to work, and they can work without cutting one another's throats in a quarrel over the exact text of Lenin's will.

MALCOLM COWLEY.

A New Morgan Thesis

THE TESTIMONY and appearances of distinguished parties at the Wheeler railway-committee hearings remind one of "the Red Fox," otherwise known in history as Martin Van Buren. Of him it was said that he rowed toward every objective with muffled oars. When he was asked on one occasion whether the sun rose in the East, he answered that such was the general impression but he could not say positively.

During the Nye investigation, J. P. Morgan and Company sought to establish the thesis that bankers had had nothing to do with influencing the policy of the Wilson administration and nothing to do with getting the country into the World War. This thesis was advanced by such a profusion of statements that casual readers were unable to discover any rhyme or reason in the story unfolded by the Nye committee. Now the Morgan company seems engaged in seeking to establish another thesis, namely, that it really has had little to do with financing railway manipulators, especially their transactions of dubious propriety. It remains to be seen whether this thesis can be established as sound. Apparently there is some fire under the smoke.

Though not called to the stand until the final day of the first two weeks of hearings, J. P. Morgan and Company was in the background throughout. This was the chief paradox of the early sessions in the current railroad-finance investigation. Other bankers whom the Senate Interstate Commerce Committee examined on all but the last day seemed to be almost nescient when the Morgan name was mentioned. When questioned about their conferences with the Morgan firm, the witnesses often said in effect: We did not talk with Morgan's about the matters you mention; on other subjects, yes; but not this.

Most important in considering the paradox is the fact that only a few of the documents produced by the Senate Committee came from the Morgan files. It was apparently in the files of other banking institutions and non-banking corporations, and not at Morgan's, that the Committee learned much of what the Morgan firm had been doing.

The surface of the record reflects J. P. Morgan and Company in a role that might be characterized as altruistic. Among those who appeared to be the beneficiaries were George A. Ball, the glass-jar manufacturer of Muncie, Indiana; the two Van Sweringen brothers, holding-company operators of Cleveland; William C. Potter, New York banker; the Alleghany Corporation of Maryland and Cleveland, one of the Van Sweringen holding companies.

Mr. Ball, as every headline reader now knows, bought through J. P. Morgan and Company for $275,000 the control of a $3,000,000,000 railroad and holding-company empire. The ratio of price paid to control purchased should be studied under both a reducing glass and a magnifying glass. Reduce the purchase price to the amount of money ordinary people might be able to scrape together. If an ordinary man could buy on the same ratio as that of the Morgan sale to Mr. Ball, $92 would purchase control of $1,000,000 of other people's money. A workman who has not more than $9.20 to invest could purchase control of $100,000 of other people's money. A schoolboy who cannot put up more than a dime, could buy control of $1,000 of other people's money, and could vote himself into enough emoluments to make out of the use of that $1,000 ten cents for candy every day of the year.

Now, the magnifying glass. It has been estimated that the total wealth of the United States is about

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

$350,000,000,000. On the ratio employed when the Morgan firm sold to Mr. Ball of Muncie, control of all the wealth of the United States could be purchased for some $32,000,000. There are several men and more little groups in the United States who could raise that amount of money. If the Morgan sale to Mr. Ball represents what is now possible through the use of holding companies, any one of a number of men or small cliques of men could acquire control of everything in the United States—the shops and factories, the farms and homes, the railroads and public utilities, the streets and vehicles, every blade of grass, all the food and all the clothing, including the dinner which will be placed before the reader of these words today and the shirt he has on his back.

In consummating through the Morgan firm the purchase of various securities, including control of the Van Sweringen domain, Mr. Ball had the help of a bank loan from the Manufacturers' Trust Company of New York. Its president, Mr. Gibson, was for ten years president of another Wall Street bank, which, he admitted, is a Morgan bank. But he denied that his present institution is a Morgan bank. In fact he denied that he had ever discussed with the Morgan firm his loan, which enabled Mr. Ball to buy from the Morgans. On this point Mr. Gibson's denial was broad, comprehensive, all-embracing and emphatic.

Another individual whom the Morgan firm benefited, though not so richly as Mr. Ball, was Mr. Potter, head of the Guaranty Trust Company of New York. Morgan's sold to him and his associates in the bank a block of stock at $600,000 under the market price. He admitted he made a profit on the transaction. But neither this altruistic attitude of Morgan's to the bank's officers nor the presence of Morgan's partners and lawyers on the bank's board of directors appeared to mean much in the way of relationship between Morgan's and Guaranty Trust. Mr. Potter always took pains to correct the impression that the bank was a Morgan bank.

It would seem that the two financial organizations had less to do with each other than would be only natural. For example, Guaranty Trust, as trustee for Alleghany Corporation bondholders, fell heir to control of the Van Sweringen empire for four years. Guaranty Trust exercised its control by turning it over to the Van Sweringen brothers, who had built their empire with Morgan financing. But Mr. Potter could not recall that his bank had consulted Morgan's on this. Senator Wheeler showed him a memorandum from the files of his bank which indicated that Guaranty Trust would consult Morgan's on the matter. He admitted that his bank conferred with Morgan's on other things. But so far as he knew, not on this, during the four years and more that Guaranty Trust controlled the empire. The three or four blocks between his office and the Morgan office were, to speak figuratively, like an impenetrable jungle.

The record also showed a kindness of the Morgan firm to the Alleghany Corporation, one of the Van Sweringen holding companies. J. P. Morgan and Company was instrumental in distributing the securities of this corporation to the public to the tune of some $175,000,000. A few months after the Morgan firm had completed this financing, the corporation was already in need of more money. The Morgan firm then entered into what appeared to be an option contract with the corporation. Under this option contract the Morgan firm made an arrangement which, as one of the bankers agreed, meant "heads the Van Sweringens win, tails the bankers lose." Mr. Potter, one of the participating bankers, acknowledged on the stand that this was a funny transaction.

He was asked whether it was not really a cover for a bank loan to the Alleghany Corporation. An actual bank loan would have violated a margin limitation put into that company's charter by the bankers for the protection of the investors who bought the company's securities. Mr. Potter repelled the idea that the option was intended to disguise a loan.

Senator Wheeler produced from the files of Mr. Potter's institution a memorandum of one of its vice-presidents showing "that the transaction was intended to be in the nature of a bank loan." Mr. Potter disposed of this memorandum. He said the vice-president who wrote it was an "overzealous young man." The Senator produced more memoranda. But every Guaranty official who had signed such memoranda or had participated in the conferences carried on between the Guaranty Trust Company and J. P. Morgan and Company on the understanding that the transaction was really a bank loan was in Mr. Potter's opinion an overzealous young man.

Another matter disclosed by the Senate committee related to the Missouri Pacific Railroad Company. The railroad was hard up early in 1932, when it had to make a $1,500,000 interest payment. The Van Sweringens went to J. P. Morgan and Company, which headed a banking syndicate to which the railroad already owed more than $11,000,000. The road was in a desperate situation. How desperate was made clear by George Whitney, a Morgan partner. Senator Wheeler said to him, "You would not have let the railroad bust at that time for $1,500,000?" Mr. Whitney's answer was that the Morgan firm would have let it bust if not assured that the newly created government lending agency would take care of the matter.

The railroad company, after consultation with the Morgan firm, obtained much larger loans from the government, and used over $7,000,000 of the money borrowed from the government to repay part of the railroad's debt to the Morgan banking syndicate.

At the time, according to several witnesses, including Interstate Commerce Commissioner Eastman and Chief Engineer Barriger of the Recon-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

struction Finance Corporation, the books of account of the railroad company had been written up in a manner to conceal the true state of its affairs, and this was not then known to the government authorities. Mr. Barriger told the Senate committee that the financial statements on which $17,000,000 of loans were obtained from the government by the Missouri Pacific Railroad Company were false in several important respects. Even the vice-president of the railroad in charge of its accounting operations testified that if he had known the facts he would not have kept the books as he did.

The upshot of the affair was that on those financial statements the railroad borrowed $17,000,000 from the government, and, as the bankers knew, used $7,000,000 of this money to pay part of its debt to them. One of the participants in the syndicate and recipients of this money was the Guaranty Trust Company of New York, which during this very period had control of Missouri Pacific.

How much the bank and J. P. Morgan and Company knew of what was going on, in the years when the Guaranty Trust had control, does not appear in detail in the record of the Senate committee's hearings to date. However, the evidence indicates that for some time, beginning over a year before the railroad's applications on incorrect records for government loans, J. P. Morgan and Company had received monthly financial statements from the railroad. It also appeared that within a few months after the railroad obtained the loans from the government, a member of the J. P. Morgan and Company staff wrote a revealing memorandum. In the course of this memorandum he incidentally stated that the railroad books of account showed large sums as special deposits despite the fact that the money had already been paid out. A Morgan partner testified that the writer of this memorandum was overzealous.

It is plain that a number of transactions already made public by the Senate committee need a good deal more explanation. It may be that some of the actions of J. P. Morgan and Company were indeed altruistic. It may be that when the full facts are produced from the files of that banking firm, the record will appear favorable to it. Or on the contrary that might not be the result.

An even more important matter, however, is the underlying issue. Why did the Senate committee, with respect to various "funny" transactions, depend to so large an extent on the files of other institutions and corporations, in discussing activities in which the Morgan firm was the chief actor?

The experience of the Senate Interstate Commerce Committee in dealing with the Morgan firm in the investigation of railroad and holding-company finance may, of course, have been different from the experience of other Senate committees. The present committee's record does not yet show, except inferentially; and if one draws any inference, it is likely to be that Senator Wheeler's committee encounters the same kind of helpfulness at the hands of the Morgan firm that earlier committees received.

What was the experience of previous committees? Representatives of the banking investigation stated that it had been difficult for the Banking Committee's staff to get all the facts from the Morgan firm. In the munitions investigation the experience of the investigators was reported to be of a similar nature.

The history of the difficulties encountered by congressional committees of inquiry in getting facts within the possession of corporations and companies, including the Morgan company, raises a fundamental issue of American public policy and private right. That issue will have to be faced some time, and now is the appointed time. It is a question of changing ethics, not one of immediate black and white. There is coming into the consciousness of many people the conception that even a private business is a public trust, especially if it is a corporation or a registered company and handles large quantities of other people's money. Where corporations are involved in any way, this conception seems to rest on indisputable grounds. Every corporation is a creature of public policy and law. It can only come into existence with the consent of government. Despite all efforts to endow it with the rights of physical persons, it remains properly and peculiarly subject to government—the author of its being. Moreover, there is a marked tendency in public policy to insist that the affairs of companies and corporations, except as to competitive trade secrets, be open to such inquiry as may be necessary to develop legislation for the protection and promotion of public interest. This tendency clashes with old conceptions of private interests. It evokes not a black and white question of right and wrong, but a question of new public right against old private right. And it may well be that the susceptibilities of perfectly honorable men will be wounded in the conflict.

To consider applications, J. P. Morgan and Company were known for years as private bankers. However, the fact is that the principal capital used in their business has been the money deposited by large corporations whose securities are owned by the investing public, and by policy holders and savings-bank depositors through life-insurance companies and savings banks which have invested in such corporations. It is also the fact that prior to the banking law of 1933 J. P. Morgan and Company was engaged both in the business of acting as bankers for such corporations and of selling its securities to the public. In consequence, it is fair to say that the activities of J. P. Morgan and Company have been activities involving other people's money and involving the conduct of corporate business subject to private control.

Furthermore, important activities of that banking firm relate to matters which have been long regarded in settled opinion as entirely within the realm of public interest and subject to the right of the public to have full disclosure of all transactions affecting the public interest. When J. P. Morgan and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Company dealt with the finances of railroads or the finances of public utilities, it was dealing with corporations affected with public interest and long recognized as necessarily subject to regulation.

Under this accepted principle of public policy, congressional committees seeking to get information (especially respecting railways and utilities) in the possession of J. P. Morgan and Company, along with all other companies, are seeking facts that are public, not private; information which the government and the nation are entitled to have; information essential to the proper functioning of government and the protection of the public interest, which of necessity embraces a wide range of private interests no less sacred than the private interests of a few. All this is in keeping with a rule once expounded to me by a former Morgan partner, the late Dwight Morrow, during a conversation in his office at the corner of Broad and Wall Streets. In discussing the possible financing of the New York Central's trackage and terminal facilities on the West Side, Mr. Morrow said that sound banking practice in our time permitted only the financing of projects that increased national wealth and were economically defensible all around.

Thus a great issue is now raised by the Wheeler committee; and public interest requires that the committee be given the time, the funds and the powers necessary to develop all the information relevant to railway financing, promotion and manipulation. The money required is a mere bagatelle compared with the enormous sums involved in the railway business, the losses which investors have suffered in recent years and the expenditures of the Interstate Commerce Commission in futile efforts at regulation on the basis of wholly inadequate information. Is the committee to be baffled? Is its inquiry, auspiciously begun, to be stifled and end in smoke? Or is the inquiry to be financed and to be pushed to a realistic conclusion that will permit the committee to present legislative proposals based on facts and calculated to mitigate, if not wholly avoid, the disasters that dog the steps of the railway business in the United States? Soon we are to find out whether the Democrats won the election and lost the government.

CHARLES A. BEARD.

Behind the Motors Strike

NEWS from General Motors plants is being interpreted by much of the press as if labor relations in automobiles had no history, or at least none before John L. Lewis and the CIO announced their intention to organize the mass-production industries. But social phenomena do not develop overnight, and important social movements must result from mass pressures as well as from the action of leaders.

During the last period of prosperity there was a good deal of sporadic unrest among the motor workers, and several times the A.F. of L. announced the intention to do something about it, though nothing effective was ever done. When depression arrived, when thousands were laid off and the relief situation became desperate, resentment against the employers grew rapidly on the ground that the motor companies had caused the influx of workers when they were needed, and then had turned them out like so many cattle—indeed, with less provision than would be made for livestock—when the demand fell off.

With the coming of the New Deal and the NRA, hope arose for workers' organizations that would bring pressure on the employers to remedy long standing grievances. Under inexperienced leadership, unions were formed spontaneously all through the region. Tool and die-makers organized the Mechanics' Educational Society, not affiliated with the A.F. of L., and this struck in 1933. Other separate groups came together and asked guidance from the national labor leaders. Many of them were given charters as "federal labor unions" directly under the A.F. of L.—that is, local bodies without any national organization of their own. They wanted a single union open to all workers in the industry, but it had been the A.F. of L. practice to split up the workers according to craft and occupation.

Meanwhile the employers, most of them traditionally hostile to labor organization of any kind, took steps to safeguard themselves from its growth. They insisted on inserting in their NRA code a "merit" clause, setting forth that employment, discharge and promotion were to be on the basis of merit. There was no objection to this principle in the abstract, but it was feared by labor that the companies, by insisting on complete freedom in this matter, would employ the phrase as a cover for discharging and blacklisting active union men. This, according to labor spokesmen, is what has actually happened. Furthermore, the industry wriggled out from under the control of the National Labor Board, which was supposed to administer Section 7a of the Recovery Act, requiring collective bargaining. A strike in the Ford plant at Edgewater, New Jersey, failed of adjustment. Various companies set up their own company unions in order formally to fulfill the legal requirements of collective bargaining without having to deal with independent unions. The Automobile Chamber of Commerce, meeting in New York, said the industry would never recognize or deal with the A.F. of L. unions. Those who composed the Chamber were largely the same men as those who controlled the NRA code authority.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Uncertainty as to how the government was going to interpret the collective-bargaining law in automobiles continued until a general strike was threatened in 1934. If precedent had been followed, the National Labor Board would have called upon both sides to consent to elections in order to find out whether the majority of workers preferred to bargain through the company unions or the independent ones, and thus to settle the question without open conflict. If the independent unions won, the Board would then have expected the employers to bargain with them and attempt to settle outstanding grievances. However, under pressure from this powerful industry (which had built up an important influence with the administration on the ground that it was going to lead recovery), the National Labor Board and its precedents were ignored, and a compromise settlement was arrived at under the direct intervention of the President. This provided for bargaining with company councils, to which the workers of each employer were to elect representatives, not on the principle of majority rule, but according to proportional representation in which the several unions would have as many representatives as their numbers called for. This scheme provided a foothold for the employers' company unions and would, it was foreseen by labor leaders, lead to trouble and confusion. The employers could play one group of representatives against another; they could divide and conquer. Union officers could function in collective bargaining, not as union officers, but only as council representatives. The prestige of the President, however, led to reluctant acceptance of the formula and the abandonment of strike plans.

The Automobile Labor Board, which administered the scheme, had a long list of individual grievances to take up, largely involving discrimination in discharge. Delay in getting to major questions resulted. The independent unions became hostile to it. A general feeling spread that the administration had not enforced genuine collective bargaining as intended under Section 7a, and that if the workers were to get that, they must do so by a demonstration of their own power. But the A.F. of L. proved incompetent for the organizing job. Only with the greatest reluctance did it finally consent to the granting of a charter for a single union in the automobile industry; it was not energetic in providing organizers or other aid. Almost as much distrust of the A.F. of L. spread among the workers as of the employers themselves.

Eventually the Supreme Court abolished the NRA, and with it of course the Automobile Labor Board, which was not mourned by anybody. The situation remained in suspense while recovery advanced, until the CIO unions came together to push organization on the industrial basis and were suspended from the A.F. of L. for doing so. The United Automobile Workers joined the CIO, and confidence in its leadership brought a new impetus to the movement for independent unionism among the automobile workers. Membership bounded up, and activity was redoubled after the overwhelming victory of the President in the recent elections.

Before the challenge to General Motors, the union had already established itself in the plants of most of the other companies. In the cases of Nash, Studebaker, Graham-Paige and Willys-Overland, Homer Martin, president of the union, declares that the companies are "not only friendly, but 100-percent organized, and we have a fine relationship with the management." In two or three of these cases, the relationship is of relatively long standing. Chrysler, Hudson and Packard, he says, are fair to the union. "The Chrysler relationship is very satisfactory, though we are not organized 100-percent there yet. We have no written contract with any of these companies. We have memorandum agreements with Nash, Studebaker, Graham-Paige and Willys-Overland and an understanding with Chrysler." Studebaker pays an average wage nine cents an hour above that in General Motors, and the union there is the sole bargaining agency for the employees. Ford remains, as it always has been, an industrial dictatorship. (Ford never even accepted the automobile code.)

Against this background, the demands submitted by the union to General Motors, and its strike to enforce them, are at least somewhat illuminated. The action is not a rash one, a sudden flare-up of mere combativeness. It undoubtedly represents the desires of many more men than are involved in the specific "sit-down" strikes at strategic points. Demand No. 1—a national conference between the United Automobile Workers of America and the heads of General Motors to negotiate a national agreement—represents the attempt to establish collective bargaining, on which everything else hangs. Conferences plant by plant, as stipulated by the company—with which labor has had plenty of experience in the past three years—cannot settle major policies. Demand No. 7—recognition of the union as sole bargaining agency—reflects the long fight against employer-dominated representation plans. Demands 5 and 6—reinstatement of unjustly discharged employees, and seniority based on length of service—represent an effort to end discrimination against union workers in discharge and promotion. These demands all have to do with the establishment of the union so that it may be secure and have power to deal with other grievances of the men. A large variety of compromises is possible concerning the other specific demands.

President Martin of the union has refuted the absurd statement by Mr. Sloan that the real issue is whether the plants are to be run by the union or by the company. We may assume that Studebaker, Nash, Hudson and the rest are still running their plants. They have merely found a way to do so that involves the collective consent of their employees about labor conditions—an achievement that is far from unique, either in this country or in American industry. GEORGE SOULE.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Tribute to Dr. Machen

The Reverend Dr. J. Gresham Machen, who died on New Year's Day, was perhaps the best known religious fundamentalist in the United States. So bitter was his opposition to present-day liberal trends that he broke away from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church and founded his own group. The church formally suspended him for this action.

The most widely publicized incident of Dr. Machen's career came in 1933 when he demanded the expulsion from the church of Pearl S. Buck, novelist, missionary and member of a missionary family. She had made a speech in which she advocated what Dr. Machen considered too liberal doctrines. Although the mission authorities sought to compromise the issue, she refused to resign "voluntarily" and compelled them to demand her resignation.—THE EDITORS.

THE New York Times a few days ago brought the news of the death of J. Gresham Machen, the fighting fundamentalist. I never knew him, but somehow it is a shock to read of his death. I find I am sorry he is dead. Though I never thought of him when he was alive, except to find occasional enjoyment in his doings when I read of them in the papers, I feel a sense of loss, knowing now that he is gone where he need no longer fight, because presumably everyone in heaven will agree with him. I hope, if he is now where he thought he would be, that he is not bored with the eternal peace.

The column devoted to him is a striking one. He was, as it says, very well, a "brilliant fundamentalist." He was subjected to every influence of liberal theology—Johns Hopkins University, Princeton Theological Seminary, Marburg, Göttingen. A man of learning and of worldly knowledge, he chose the most narrow fundamentalism and dedicated himself and all his remarkable gifts to that creed.

Nothing dismayed him, no inconsistency troubled him. He was too large a man to be so troubled. In the days when he was hot upon the trail of my own too liberal soul, I received from him, in the midst of his public protestations, a private letter saying that he hoped I would not misunderstand his denunciations or in any way interpret them as being at all personal to me. He had, he said, the utmost respect for me as a person, but no respect at all for my views. I replied that I perfectly understood, inasmuch as this was exactly the way I felt about him, the only difference being that I believed he had the same right to his views that I had to my own. He wrote again to say very courteously that I was completely mistaken, since views were either right or wrong, and his were right. There seemed no more to be said on the matter. I felt it a little beneath him, however, when in his recent split from his mother church he appealed for "religious liberty." This, I think, was a weakening. I wish that he had said he was right because he was right. It would have been more like him.

For I admired Dr. Machen very much while I disagreed with him on every point. And we had much the same fate. I was kicked out of the back door of the church and he was kicked out of the front one. He retaliated by establishing a church of his own. The mother church was called the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America, but he gave his church a bigger name—the Presbyterian Church of America. Of course what he did not realize was that he could never have lived in a church. As soon as it had become an entity he would have had to compromise with this opinion or that, or more impossible still to him, with a majority opinion, and he would have had to break again with them all. One might say death was merciful to him, except I have an idea he enjoyed his wars.

The man was admirable. He never gave in one inch to anyone. He never bowed his head. It was not in him to trim or compromise, to accept any peace that was less than triumph. He was a glorious enemy because he was completely open and direct in his angers and hatreds. He stood for something and everyone knew what it was. There was no shilly-shally in him. His attacks were intelligently conceived and logically executed, with a ruthlessness that was extraordinary in its consistency. In another age he would have burned people at the stake in serene confidence that he was serving his God truly. And so he would have been, for his God was a jealous God, and he served with a whole-heartedness of which only a few great spirits are capable. In a present world of dubious woven grays, his life was a flaming thread of scarlet, regardless and undismayed. He was afraid of nothing and of no one. Fortunately he was called to the limited field of Protestant religion. In the Catholic Church he might have become a dangerously powerful figure, and had he found his expression in politics, our country might have chosen him as the first candidate for dictatorship. It was therefore a comparatively mild matter that he merely hounded from the church those who held a creed different from his own.

The church has lost a colorful figure and a mind which stimulated by its constant contrary activities. He added life to the church, and it needs life. And we have all lost something in him. We have lost a man whom our times can ill spare, a man who had convictions which were real to him and who fought for those convictions and held to them through every change in time and human thought. There was a power in him which was positive in its very negations. He was worth a hundred of his fellows who, as princes of the church, occupy easy places and play their church politics and trim their sails to every wind, who in their smug observance of the conventions of life and religion offend all honest and searching spirits. No forthright mind can live among them, neither the honest skeptic nor the honest dogmatist. I wish Dr. Machen had lived to go on fighting them.

PEARL S. BUCK.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Washington Notes

Another New Deal Budget—Eight Billion Dollars and How It Grew—A Mexican Civil War?

THE ADMINISTRATION'S 1938 budget contains unappreciated wonders. Next to possible legislation on wages, hours and collective bargaining, it is the most important news that is likely to come out of Washington during the present session of Congress. It signalizes the end of the major internal quarrel among New Dealers; it means that, like time, the New Deal marches on.

Since the first days of the New Deal, a group of Mr. Roosevelt's advisers has felt that the most vital task of the administration was monetary management. They have argued that the administration, at the earliest possible moment, ought to cease its borrowings from private sources. While Mr. Marriner S. Eccles, chief of the monetary-management group, has shown no concern over the New Deal's spending, many other important officials have, especially those in the Treasury. For months, a constant tug-of-war has gone on in Washington between New Dealers who wished Mr. Roosevelt to economize, and those, like Mr. Harry Hopkins, who insisted that the present level of expenditures be maintained.

Until lately, the economy group clearly had the stronger pull. They were responsible for the order from Mr. Roosevelt last month to cut the WPA rolls by 150,000 workers. They had laid elaborate plans to ensure that relief expenditures were shaved for the coming fiscal year.

The 1938 budget gives public confirmation that this situation is now wholly altered. It is true that, in all probability, the 1938 budget cannot be technically balanced. But the surprising and welcome strength shown by the present tax structure, plus the very important aid that the payroll taxes under the Social Security Act are expected to give, make it seem likely that the government will not again be obliged to enter the money market for new funds. To bring this about was the real objective of the money-management group, and they are now apparently satisfied. As nearly as I can find out, their pressure on Mr. Roosevelt to curtail New Deal activities has been suddenly lifted.

The sleight-of-hand by which the Social Security Act is expected to rescue the New Deal is easily explained. Under the law, the administration is required to invest the proceeds of the payroll tax in government securities, as a reserve against future payments on old-age annuities. In normal times, no doubt, the government would buy back its obligations held by the banks and private investors. But there is no reason under the law why the administration cannot instruct the Bureau of Engraving to print up a batch of glistening new bonds, credit these to the social-security-reserve fund and use the payroll-tax receipts directly for current expenses. Almost certainly this is what the administration will do for the coming fiscal year. According to estimates, it will give the Treasury about $700,000,000 in additional funds without resort to public borrowing.

Tax receipts are now running at the rate of about $5,500,000,000 a year. It seems safe to assume that they will be increased by at least 10 percent during the 1938 fiscal year. In 1938, moreover, the Treasury will receive the full amount of the undistributed-profits tax, plus the yield of the new, increased surtaxes on great fortunes, which will mean perhaps an extra $300,000,000. With the $700,000,000 that will be brought in by the social-security payroll tax, a total of between $7,000,000,000 and $7,500,000,000 is virtually certain as the 1938 revenue.

By a second sleight-of-hand trick, the nominal budget that can be supported by this revenue may be lifted still further. As long as a true balancing of the budget is impossible, the Treasury is legitimately entitled to disregard the sum required for statutory debt retirement, merely adding it to the formal gross deficit. This is an item of more than $4,000,000,000. Consequently, without going to the banks or investing public for a nickel of new money, the Treasury next year can handle a nominal budget of close to $8,000,000,000. This means the New Deal is safe and that its most important activities will go on.

It does not mean, of course, that appropriations of $8,000,000,000 will roller-coast through Congress without opposition. Conservative Democrats and Republicans in the Senate, under the leadership of Byrd of Virginia, will fight like hyenas. According to report, they will demand a return to the budget of the early Hoover period of about $4,000,000,000, and they will have the backing of the United States Chamber of Commerce and every reactionary business organization in the country. I predict they will be beaten. Once again the New Dealers are a band of brothers, firm against the foe.

Even $8,000,000,000, it is necessary to point out, will not permit the New Deal to do all that should be done. It is likely that the Public Works Administration will be cut to the bone, and that the Resettlement Administration will fare badly. The prospects for direct federal low-cost housing are extremely dim. During the last few weeks, Budget Director Bell has performed horrendous amputations on important New Deal agencies. For example, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, which is very nearly the frontal lobe of the New Deal brain, had its modest budget cut by more than half.

But an eight-billion-dollar budget does mean that the unemployed will be no worse off than they are now. By all signs, Mr. Hopkins is going to get the secretaryship of the new Public Welfare Department, together with two billions in cash. Able-bodied unemployed workers are not going to be forced to grab at substandard or strikebreaking jobs, and such progress as the WPA has made toward raising living standards in the South will be conserved.

According to his associates, Secretary Morgenthau has always been willing to support a spending program, provided that the administration were prepared to levy new taxes to cover it. Indeed, none of the so-called right-wingers of the New Deal, so far as I know, has ever wished to go back to the Hoover level of spending. Certain influential Treasury officials predict that, as soon as recovery progresses to a point where additional taxes may be imposed without danger, the budget will be further increased. They incline to the belief that the country will eventually have a permanent budget of about ten billions a year, as a crude, direct means of forcing a wider distribution of income.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A number of Congressmen last week privately confessed to strong misgivings over the extension of the neutrality law to cover civil wars. They were worried not so much by Spain as by Mexico. For some time the report has been current here that the supporters of former President Calles are making active preparations to overthrow the existing Cardenas regime, and that they will strike at the first opportunity. It is entirely probable that the Calles followers will have underground financial assistance from the United States oil and mining companies whose profits have been hurt by Señor Cardenas' relatively liberal labor policies. New Dealers in Congress are asking themselves whether this country would really want to remain neutral in a civil war between Cardenas and Calles, and risk the overthrow of the present Mexican government, perhaps the most genuinely democratic in Latin America.

Washington. T. R. B.

Other People's Money

Commissioner Landis Misses a Golden Opportunity —Underwriting, Trusteeships and the SEC— What Is the Commission's Function?

RUMOR hath it that Mr. James Landis will leave the Securities and Exchange Commission. Mr. Landis adds a little color to the rumors by denying them and assuring that he will certainly not leave before summer. There is just a faint possibility that his departure would rock the stock market more cruelly than the Pope's death. For after all he has turned out to be a man with a generous and kindly understanding and tolerance of the problems of that gay institution. You may be sure that the Street would witness his going with deep concern. In any case it looks as if we must now put the "death watch" on Mr. Landis and prepare his official obituary. And within the month he himself has contributed a very meaty and interpretative decision on the case of the Kansas Electric Power Company, which ought to be of aid when the obituaries are written.

But before we offer this interesting episode it is necessary to have a peep at a few facts within and without the Commission.

First of all, everyone knows about the investment-banker underwriter and his little racket of fastening himself on a corporation so that he may enjoy a monopoly of its underwriting business. He climbs inside the corporation by various means. One way is to get ownership or control of a sizable block of stock. Another way is to get a place or two on the board of directors of the corporation. Thereafter, while discharging a function of trust to the corporation, he represents himself, in order to get the corporation's business. It's one of those well known "two-master" jobs for which business is famous. The Pujo committee denounced this twenty-four years ago. The Pecora investigation condemned it. Innumerable men have been pointing to it as a sore spot. But up to now no one has had much power to do anything about it until in a small way the Utility Holding Company Act lodged some power with the SEC.

The next ancient abuse to be recalled is the trustee abuse. Corporation bond issues always name a trustee to represent the bondholders. They are to see that the indenture in the first place gives the bondholders protection and that the terms of the bond are carried out. In practice, however, banks and trust companies are made trustees for bondholders but usually are named by and are allied with the promoters whose interest is adverse to that of the bondholders. As a result bondholders have very frequently been betrayed and their interests exploited by managers and promoters without let or hindrance from the banker-trustee.

Now for a fact or two about the Commission, before we get back to Commissioner Jim. One of the finest jobs done in the Commission was the investigation of corporate reorganizations by Mr. William O. Douglas. Incidentally, Commissioner Healy is now doing a similarly fine job on the investment trusts. Douglas' splendid work won for him a deserved place on the Commission. That was a lucky break for investors. He wrote a report on reorganization practices in which, among other things, he blistered the hides of the bankers for their bad record on bond trusteeships. Some of the top-lofty gentlemen in New York permitted their side-whiskers to bristle; they formed a committee to combat Douglas' report. They took their rising blood pressure down to Washington, where they proceeded to read the riot act to the imperturbable Douglas. So here was a row between the Commission and the bankers about their bad trustee performances.

Now, then, in the midst of all this, fate sends the Kansas Electric Power Company to the Commission with a declaration required by law concerning an issue and sale of $5,000,000 of bonds. This they were required to do by the Utility Holding Company Act. You remember it. You recall the blather about the "death sentence." At the time I tried to point out that it involved no death sentence, and you will now see into the hands of what meek and humble executioners the utilities have fallen.

The Kansas Electric Power Company is part of the former Middle West system of Mr. Insull. The Middle West Corporation is a holding company owning utilities and ice plants, trolleys and all sorts of things in fifteen states, Canada and Mexico. The Middle West Corporation owns the Kansas Electric Power Company. And the Kansas company wanted to borrow $5,000,000. Here was a piece of underwriting business. Who would get it? That question apparently was up to another subsidiary of the Middle West Corporation—the Middle West Service Company. The Middle West and the Middle West Service Company had the same directors. But the decision was not made by them, but by the Service Company's Finance Committee.

This Service Company was supposed to handle all the financial problems of all Middle West subsidiaries. And decision was in the hands of the Finance Committee of the Service Company. There are four members on that committee. So you can see what an effective spot this is for anyone who wants to get the business of the Middle West Corporation and its countless subsidiaries.

On this committee of four are four directors of the Service Company, also directors of the Middle West. One of them is a representative of the Bankers' Trust Company of New York, another a representative of the First National Bank of Chicago. Now these directors were also supposed to be representatives of the stockholders of Middle West and Kansas Electric Power. But they had two plums

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to pass out. One was the trusteeship of the bondholders. The other was the underwriting of the bond issue.

The trusteeship they handed over to the Bankers' Trust Company. The underwriting they handed over to A. G. Becker and Company and Field, Glore and Company and others. A. G. Becker and Company and Field, Glore and Company are large stockholders in Middle West and so are the Bankers' Trust Company and the First National of Chicago.

The underwriters were given the job on terms which allowed them a spread of 2.5 percent on the issue, which, as Commissioner Healy pointed out, is larger than has been paid by other companies with no better credit. There was no competition for the issue. The Kansas Electric Power directors, even the Service Company directors and managers, were not allowed to look about to see how they might get the issue handled on the lowest terms. It was passed out to the two firms named and the Commission observed that it could elicit no satisfactory reason why these two firms should play so large a part in Middle West financing. Here was a clear case of the old-fashioned inside job.

But the trusteeship was much worse. The Bankers' Trust Company was given that job. It had a representative inside the Middle West Corporation at the very spot where such jobs were passed out. But more serious, the Bankers' Trust Company of New York is the largest single stockholder in the Middle West system. Why should a stockholder be made the trustee of the bondholder? It is indefensible. It is even more difficult to understand how honorable men would ever lend themselves to such a thing.

The facts as stated above were submitted to the Commission by its examiners. In their decision they set out these facts as established. What should have been their course? Their course under ordinary circumstances would be plain. But it was doubly plain here, since a bankers' committee had gone to Washington to put Commissioner Douglas in his place.

And then, when all the facts had been gathered and confirmed, *the Commission authorized the issue.* In its decision it deplored these practices and said that it authorized the issue reluctantly, but that if the issue were denied it would cause inconvenience and perhaps money loss to the companies involved, since these damning facts were not disclosed until the last minute.

Here was the finest opportunity in twenty-five years to strike a real blow at an abuse which every decent business man must condemn, yet the Commission passed it up because they might inconvenience the offenders. And they permitted one of the offenders to escape even being summoned because it might embarrass him.

There is one bright feature in all this, however. It is that Commissioner Healy and Commissioner Douglas dissented, as anyone might know they would. Commissioner Healy wrote a vigorous dissenting opinion. He spoke of the "gross impropriety" of the trusteeship, which, he said, "is recognized by the majority." Yet "despite this the majority approves the issue, presumably in the hope that the trustee will divest itself of its present conflicting interest or resign. A belated change in the trustee will not alter the terms of the indenture. The opportunity for an independent negotiation with an eye single to the interests of the bondholders has passed." And he then points out that the whole thing is in defiance of the Commission's own report to Congress of June 18, 1936, entitled "Trustees in Debentures," in which the Commission gave notice of its views. "This deal," he continued, "has the reek that so often attended those deals involving operating companies, holding companies and investment bankers in earlier days. While the majority opinion holds out the definite promise of putting an end to them at some time in the future, it seems to me that the more effective course, having met this one, *is to stop it.*" And it is quite difficult to climb over that last simple sentence. To this opinion Commissioner Douglas assented.

One might make some allowance for this performance if it were not of a piece with so much that has happened in that Commission, usually with Commissioner Landis following the path of meekness and gentleness with sinners. There was that first case of Northern States Power—the first test—when Landis and Kennedy, and Matthews who always trails along obediently with Brother Landis, approved a form of accounting which brought a vigorous dissent from Commissioners Pecora and Healy. There was indeed that first hearing—one of the very first—when the full Commission took up the subject of the specialist. I appeared there, at the Commission's request, to present the case against the specialist. And to my utter amazement it was Commissioner Landis who seemed to be defending everything the specialist did. There was the case of the unlisted market when the Commission's own investigators reported against it. It was thrown into the wastebasket and the New York Curb was given a bill of health on one of its worst sides. There was the case of segregation of brokers' functions, when the economic division reported strongly in favor of segregation and the report, under Mr. Landis' leadership, was also brushed aside and the subject turned over to another committee on which there was more than one ex-Wall Street habitué, at least one of whom is now back in his brokerage office. And a mild, watery, ineffective, almost stupidly futile form of segregation is being recommended. And there are the exchange investigations, of which I believe there are four pending, for manipulation, the case of one pending for a year.

Of course I am not impugning the Commission's honesty. But I am criticizing its amazing attitude toward its functions. And this is largely the work of Chairman Landis. Certainly the President cannot be criticized for the appointment. He chose Landis on the recommendation of the liberal groups. I recall my own satisfaction at the appointment. He may be a good lawyer, a good law professor. But he is a hopeless failure as chairman of the SEC.

The pity of it all is that the Commission has done much good work and might have done so much more under virile leadership. Instead it fell under the leadership of a man who, though honest, apparently looks with apprehension at the long years that stretch before him in a world where persons of high respectability seem to control the destinies of men who want to get along. He shrinks from action that might invade their sanctified territories. As long as he remains at the head of the Commission the President's high hopes for that body are in constant peril. He will drive no money changers from any temple. He stands in too much awe of the temple and bows with too much reverence before the priests.

JOHN T. FLYNN.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Preparing Actors

An Actor Prepares, by Constantin Stanislavsky. Translated by Elizabeth Reynolds Hapgood. New York: Theatre Arts Monthly. 303 pages. $2.50.

MR. STANISLAVSKY'S new book of "lessons in the theory and art of acting" is remarkable as a theatre approach to the expression of our modern life; as a record of the actor temperament and a method for handling that temperament; and as a monument to patient and sincere artistic piety on the author's part. Most of all this treatise is a brilliant example of teaching, a genius for teaching. The general scheme is that of the Socrates of the "Symposium," which is to say the pupils are asked questions by the master, and are led by him through trial and error toward certain luminous conclusions that he has had in mind from the start. The pupils may seem at times a little dull in being the last to hit the answer, but that is a defect inherent in the scheme, a part of the convention. To a reader who knows actors or the actor temperament, the brilliance of Mr. Stanislavsky's achievement will be the more evident. If you say to the average actor after one of his performances, "How wonderful you were in such and such a scene, I could see you were thinking of Plotinus' saying," he will soon perceive how penetrating you, in your turn, are; and though he had never up to then heard of Plotinus or any word of his, he will soon be convinced that it was this saying that charged his mind with its shining freight. I exaggerate the point here so that it may be clearer. It concerns the suggestibility of actors and their simple and often childish egotism. The one and almost only thing that your true actor cannot forgive is that you are not thinking about him. On this score the method set forth by this great teacher is a triumph of sincerity, seriousness, warm life and human truth, and is such an arsenal of analyses and probings, sheltering wings and personal attentions as few actors could resist.

The system on which the teaching is based that went into the training of the Moscow Art Theatre is already well known to students of the subject; in, for example, the author's own earlier work, "My Life in Art," and in the writings of various persons who had studied under him. This new volume is more definitely in the nature of a handbook of the system. The cardinal principle of that system is that through conscious means we reach the subconscious. The preparation given trains the pupil's "inner creative state," helps him to find his "super-objective"; and "through line of action" it creates a "conscious psycho-technique," and in the end leads him to the "region of the subconscious." To try to make all that clear in a short space would be only defeating; for the whole length and patience of the book are to do just that. To this end there are also lessons and exercises described, dramatized or indicated for the actor. Much of it is infinitely suggestive for both the public reader and the actor. Where it is neither final esthetically nor distinguished intellectually, it can be poignant, brotherly, engaging or seminative.

Such a treatise as this, with its pressing emphasis in the direction of feeling, genuine living and the subconscious, would inevitably lead toward certain statements—that on the jacket for instance—about Stanislavsky's having "revolutionized the art of acting—replacing the stilted and artificial conventions that had no relation to life with a realism in which the actor studied and submerged himself in the personality of the character portrayed." . . . "Stilted and artificial conventions that had no relation to life" would serve very well for a revolutionary, preferably young and pragmatically ignorant, seeking to put a cause over, or for a peasant darkened with his limited sincerity; but in a serious discussion of the art of acting it is merely nonsensical. In a prefatory note, however, the translator has taken care more or less of such lapses. "A genius like Salvini or Duse," we are told, "may in Mr. Stanislavsky's opinion use without theory the right emotions and expressions that to the less inspired but intelligent student need to be taught." Duse without a school or a teaching obsession is one thing, Duse without theory is quite another—and only the most naïve state of mind could imagine such a case. The idea that Mr. Stanislavsky could perceive, achieve and teach Duse's "right emotions and expressions" may also be a little naïve, but we will let that pass. The remark is meant to disclaim any intention of artistic narrowness, and to indicate the system's primary purpose.

And yet the impression you get from the jacket sentence is not wholly misleading. The fact remains that over and above the book's direct statement, there is a drift or ardent slant, or savor, that is most inadequate with regard to the broad field of art, culture, acting, style. Talking very much about falseness, for example, or about "artifice" is dangerous ground. "You can never get away from yourself. The moment you lose yourself on the stage marks the departure from truly living your part and the beginning of exaggerated false acting." As for that last, we may say not necessarily so. It would be more basic to say "the beginning of a loss of medium (which, since you are an actor, is yourself)." ". . . to free his art from mechanical and stereotyped acting, from 'tricks' and all forms of artificiality"—one has to be careful in such talking not to seem limited with regard to traditional, artificial or conventional forms, or to effects achieved through *combination.* Such passages serve to illustrate the place where this Russian accent falls. The supreme qualities in Russian literature point the same way. Never in numerous conversations that I have had about Molière with members of the Moscow Art Theatre did I see any very sound comprehension, not, certainly, of what the French at least think Molière to be and what he appears to will for himself. To my Russian friends, the language of order and tone meant little. They had less conception of comedy than of the patent farce so often found serving as the Molière framework. I recall, too, Madame Chekhov's reply to my simple inquiry as to what Chekhov thought of the classic drama, Euripides, for example. "How does one know?" she said, not at all antagonistically, "what one thinks? One day you may feel one way, the next day another." It is rather obvious that any conception not of individual mood but of civilization, with its line of continuity, runs in the contrary direction, and that such a reply was only a mild form of barbarism. There is also the Moscow Art Theatre production of Goldoni's "La Locandiera." Mr. Stanislavsky in "An Actor Prepares" speaks of this play with marked propriety, and of the process by which "the whole inner essence of the play became evident." I saw the production. It was conscientious, highly polished exter-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nally, but fundamentally crude. One of its results was to make the unknowing speak of a fine rendering of a light piece. On the other hand, the fact is equally notable that the supreme achievement of this company was in Chekhov.

Such limitations and high qualities may be set down as cultural, racial, social, what you will. "An Actor Prepares" is a profound illustration, *sui generis*. To one outside the Russian, Mrs. Hapgood's translation would seem as near perfection as could be, direct and fresh, natural and persuasive.

STARK YOUNG.

The Bandwagon

Wages, working conditions, honest collective bargaining, have little, if anything, to do with the underlying situation. —*Alfred P. Sloan Jr., president of General Motors, in a newspaper advertisement regarding the company's labor difficulties.*

We have, after all, as guardians of democracy in this little island, to see that we do our work to maintain the integrity of monarchy—that monarchy which, as I said at the beginning of my speech, is now the sole link of the whole empire and guardian of our freedom.—*Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin, quoted in a news article in The New York Times.*

No matter what one thinks of National Socialism as a political system or of Hitler as an individualist, an aggressive war of conquest certainly is not contemplated by him or any other member of his government.—*A letter from Otto E. Lessing, Williamstown, Mass., published in The Living Age.*

THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMANTIC TRADITION

We all share the Archbishop's regret that Edward VIII insists on marrying the woman with whom he happened to fall in love.—*Letter to the editor of the London, England, Sunday Referee.*

WE KNEW IT ALL THE TIME

Surrealistic art and dadaism, which have become linked in the minds of many persons with one of the outstanding examples, the fur-covered cup, plate and spoon on exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West Fifty-third Street, were denounced yesterday by the Defenders of Democracy, 1 West Fifty-third Street, as a new move by international communists in their war on standards in religion, industry, society and the arts. A committee of five artists brought in the verdict.—*News item in The New York Herald Tribune.*

THANK GOD FOR MAINE DEPARTMENT

I offered my services as a speaker and was invited to Maine, Texas, Iowa and California. But in only one state was I given the support and publicity with a statewide radio contract which enabled me to reach the millions of readers of the Macfadden Publications. And that was Maine, the only state in which the Republicans made a reasonably decent showing.—*From an editorial by Bernarr Macfadden in Liberty.*

Our readers are invited to contribute to this column and $1 will be paid for each item used. Address The Bandwagon, care of The New Republic.—THE EDITORS.

CORRESPONDENCE

Editor and Publisher and the Guild

SIR: Your article in the issue of December 23 entitled "The Guild Goes to Town" expresses a viewpoint which, of course, is not ours. I appreciate your opinion, however, and merely wish to correct one or two impressions of particular interest to us.

One is that Editor and Publisher is the "official trade organ" of the ANPA or any other publishers' organization. We receive no support from any organization of newspaper publishers. Our views at no time are colored to meet theirs. We try to express the feelings and the wishes of the entire industry, employer and employee alike, and our columns are open to all on that equal basis.

Second, I should like also to correct the impression in your editorial that Editor and Publisher seems ready to concede that the Guild has attained recognition as the organization of editorial employees. The Guild will have to obtain considerably larger membership among the employees themselves before we will make any such concession.

New York City. ARTHUR J. ROBB, Executive Editor.

Pavlov's Bequest

SIR: If Mr. Hart, who sent you the statement by Pavlov that you printed in your issue of December 23, will consult Science for April 17, 1936 (vol. 83, no. 2155, p. 369), he will find there an article entitled "Bequest of Pavlov to the Academic Youth of His Country," a translation by Professor P. Kupalov, chief assistant in the Pavlov Institute at Leningrad.

Since Science circulates to almost all the scientific men in the United States, would it not seem as though this important document had been made available to just that group it might be most desirable to have it reach? In my own case, I have twice since its appearance read it to groups of students to whom I was trying to make plain the attitude scientists should take toward their work.

Evanston, Ill. MELVILLE J. HERSKOVITS.

The Maritime Strike

SIR: We take this occasion to restate a few facts about the maritime strike. In reference to the so-called broken agreements. On the West Coast an agreement was in force prior to the strike providing the workers with a union-run hiring hall; this provision was broken *not* by the strikers but by the shipowners. On the East Coast an agreement proposed by the repudiated officials was rejected by a six-to-one vote of the rank-and-file membership. The shipowners and the repudiated officials must recognize that the agreement they had signed was not binding on the membership.

One hundred thousand men are on strike. It is not, as Mayor Rossi asserts—apparently speaking for the shipowners—a personal bid for power being fought out between Ryan on the one hand and Bridges and Curran on the other. The strikers are fighting because they demand that their unions be run by and in the interests of the rank and file. The strike is the result of the wholehearted desire of the maritime workers to raise their living conditions to an approximation of what is commonly thought to be the American standard of living.

As to the "outlaw" aspect of the strike on the East Coast: It was voted by over 1,400 members of the ISU at a meeting in Cooper Union on November 6.

Cause for failure of negotiations: It is absolutely essential to the seamen that all coast agreements begin and terminate at the same time in order to make collective bargaining a reality instead of a mockery. The insistence of the ISU that the Masters, Mates and Pilots must be included in a possible settlement of the strike is based not only on moral grounds, because of the fact that this union went out in sympathy, but also on the realization that the union can protect itself only through genuine industrial organization.

It is indicative of the temper of the shipowners that they now use Mayor Rossi as a mouthpiece in a nationwide radio broadcast. It is an intention to use official means to break the strike. Mayor Rossi asked the public to demand that the federal government intervene.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This move, we warn the public, is not well intentioned. It is an attempt to use governmental agencies to break strikes. We ask all fair-minded people to counter this move by demanding that the President carry out his campaign pledges to labor that the maritime workers get a fair deal and an equitable settlement of their strike.

CHARLES SAUNDERS,
For the Striking Members of the ISU
Strike Strategy Committee.

New York City.

An Economist Prophesies

SIR: Dr. Edwin W. Kemmerer, Princeton professor, addressing the American Finance Conference, announced categorically, if news reports are to be trusted, that the cost of living in this United States would rise within a few years to 109 percent above the level of 1936.

This was a striking statement. The striking thing about it was the precision of the percentage and the ambiguity, not to say metaphysics, of the time lapse. One is tempted to inquire of the Doctor just when we are to have that thirty-cent dollar, making a rough allowance for our present devaluation and inflation. But such an inquiry would be rated an impertinence; for these classical economists, when they bid a slam, always have what bridge players call an out.

Old Greenwich, Conn. SILAS BENT.

The Washington Commonwealth Federation

SIR: May I say a word in defense of your very fair editorial article on the Washington Commonwealth Federation in the issue of December 2, which was criticized by Alfred Bingham in the following issue?

Mr. Bingham apparently gets his information from Cyrus Woodward, ex-president of the WCF, who contributed to the last issue of Common Sense. . ... While no one questions Woodward's personal honesty, it is true that he was unable to coöperate effectively with the wide range of groups that make up the WCF, especially labor. Since he resigned as president, the WCF has grown faster than ever before; the final figures showed 510 delegates at the last convention. The truth of the charge that the real radicals have withdrawn, and the extent of Woodward's "radicalness," can be gauged from the fact that as soon as he left the organization he gave a series of interviews to the conservative Seattle Times, saying that the Federation was dominated by the Communists. The extent of Woodward's following is seen in the fact that his candidate for Governor on a third-party ticket received 1,994 votes.

The WCF this year went on the assumption that the most effective thing to do was to unite all progressives and radicals; they went a long way toward this in abandoning the three words "production for use," which had been made almost synonymous with sovietism in the public mind by the reactionary press, and instead writing such specific things as public ownership of monopolies, subsidizing of farm and other coöperatives, etc., into their platform. Initiative 119 (not 110) is now a dead issue, having been defeated by a 3-to-1 vote. Even the WCF members themselves were not confident in the power of their own initiative to cure our economic ills, especially since it would have been administered under officials and courts at least partly hostile, and since it would be a very piecemeal proposition at best, and liable to be used by vested interests to unload their white elephants. It is therefore apparent that further growth, and a program which will make growth possible, are the main problems.

Last, the Federation's resolution to coöperate with the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party and like groups in future political action, passed unanimously at the last convention, clearly shows its orientation. To have taken this action sooner would have been premature, would have cost the Federation much of its labor and progressive following and would have endangered the candidates nominated this year through the Democratic Party (whose platform, after all, was largely written by the WCF this year).

Seattle, Wash. S. C. MENEFEE.

From The New Republic Mail Bag

Abner Green, of the American Committee for Protection of Foreign Born, informs us of the case of Lorenzo Puentes, who is being held for deportation to Cuba, charged with membership in the Communist Party. Mr. Puentes is one of the witnesses in the case of Lawrence Ponder, leader of the vigilantes who broke up the election rally of Earl Browder in Florida October 25.

The National Home Library Foundation, du Pont Circle Building, Washington, D. C., sends an announcement of the new titles now available in their 15 and 25-cent editions, ranging from "Tom Sawyer" to "Brandeis and the Modern State."

Max Putzel, of St. Louis, says he is so heartily in accord with Lewis Mumford's recent "Letter to the President" protesting the cuts on the WPA arts projects that he thinks signatures should be collected and the article sent to the President as a public petition. . . . Louis Paul of Woodhaven, New York, disagrees completely with Mr. Mumford, believing that art supported by the taxpayers through the government is undesirable.

Another protest against the recent article concerning Commonwealth College in Liberty magazine comes from Henry Flury, of Alexandria, Virginia, who attended the college with his wife and two children in the summer of 1932.

A number of correspondents discuss Bruce Bliven's article, "For His Holiness," in The New Republic for December 23. A. Garcia Diaz, of New York City, encloses a copy of a letter he sent to several New York newspapers criticizing the stand of the Pope on the Spanish civil war, and his lack of opposition to fascism. But Chauncey S. Curtis of Chicago thinks that one can hope no better from the Church and is surprised that Mr. Bliven should expect his letter to have any effect.

From Portland, Oregon, E. Lipson writes that we are falling into an old fallacy when we say Germany might hesitate to start a war because of lack of food. For the most part, he says, aggressor nations have been poor ones.

Roger A. Jones, former secretary of the Longview, Washington, local of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, writes us about the conflict between the organized lumber workers of the Northwest and the Brotherhood. These workers were organized, despite great handicaps and largely through their own efforts, under federal charters directly affiliated with the A.F. of L. When the A. F. of L. executive board gave the Brotherhood jurisdiction over them they accepted, with the proviso that they were to have complete autonomy, while at the same time they planned a strike of all locals unless their demands for a 75-cent minimum wage, a 30-hour week and union recognition were met. With the approval of the Brotherhood organizer, A. B. Muir, the Northwest Council was given complete jurisdiction over the strike, but when the Council and the Longview local refused a settlement Muir had negotiated for Longview, the key point, the Brotherhood ordered the strikers back to work. They refused, whereupon the Northwest Council was declared illegal, the charter of the Longview local revoked and state police called in to beat and gas pickets.

What's on the Air?

The United States Department of Commerce begins a new series of weekly programs with a discussion of the railroad systems of the country. Saturday, January 16, 3:30 P.M., CBS.

Dr. Morris Fishbein, editor of The Journal of the American Medical Association, says "Don't Die of Diabetes!" Saturday, January 19, 5 to 5:30 P.M., NBC-Blue Network.

Ceremonies of the second inauguration of President Roosevelt, including the President's speech, will be broadcast by both major networks and most of the other radio stations in the country on Wednesday, January 20, beginning at approximately 10 A.M.

America's Town Meeting of the Air will consider "Industry and Consumers' Coöperatives" with Murray Lincoln, director of the Ohio Farm Bureau, as one of the chief speakers. Thursday, January 21, 9:30 to 10:30 P.M., NBC-Blue Network.

Secretary of Agriculture Henry A. Wallace will discuss the question of "Farm Tenancy." Friday, January 22, 10:30 P.M., NBC.

All times given are Eastern Standard.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Among the Spoilers

Hamilton Fish: The Inner History of the Grant Administration, by Allan Nevins. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company. 953 pages. $5.

SECRETARY OF STATE Hamilton Fish was the only member of the Grant Cabinet who stayed on throughout the two terms of the glorious soldier's inglorious presidency. He was one of the small handful of political personages surrounding Grant who did not try to steal the very columns of the Capitol or the stones of the Treasury Building. For this notorious honesty the monument by Nevins is perhaps merited; although the cynical may protest that being very rich and old when he came into high office, Mr. Fish was as one who had already feasted much and was surfeited with the fleshpots for which the political spoilsmen lusted.

Nevins' long biography is full of interest to those who are known in university circles as "hardened scholars," those who live to eat and drink the raw historical document. The private diaries and papers of Fish, now made public after half a century, and voluminously interlarding the text, help to make a striking tableau of the tremendous political débâcle of the 1870's.

A man of education and moderate ability, Fish wrote a private journal which is not so vivid or bitter as the famous one of Gabriel Welles, but lacks the piety and self-complacency of Rutherford Hayes, another of his contemporaries. Fish was not a colorful Secretary and party leader like Seward or Blaine, nor a diplomat of unusual finesse like John Hay. Unfailing restraint and even timidity seem to be his chief characteristics as he witnesses and describes from close by, in a quiet, objective recital, the appalling blunders and scandals of the time. A Dutchman and Knickerbocker grandee to the last, very reserved, very respectable, his official accomplishments might be summed up largely as those of one who labored always to prevent "something worse" from happening.

As a man of inherited landed wealth, Hamilton Fish had been a leader of the old Whig Party—the party of law and order, of hard money and protective tariffs, of "business and wealth," fighting, as its partisans themselves phrased it, against "the heterogeneous mass of vile humanity." This is the key to his later rear-guard action under Grant. The triumphant war party into which he had been dragged, much like Lincoln, was led by dangerous extremists in the decade after the war, extremists who knowingly or not were carrying out their part in the great advance of industrial capitalism during the Reconstruction period, but who committed at the same time a thousand wild political excesses such as a bourgeois of the old school would seek to curb.

The military adventurers who had entered the government—such as General Rawlins, Grant's first Secretary of War—would have seized Cuba, fought Spain, plundered San Domingo, challenged England. Fish wisely used delaying tactics and ultimately checkmated these perilous schemes. What *business* was there in San Domingo anyway? The United States then still formed a huge, undeveloped colonial empire; the country hungered for foreign capital, as any sound financial fellow could see. Delaying tactics also helped to smooth out the negotiation of the Alabama Claims with England, Fish overcoming the belligerency of Senator Sumner and Motley, our Minister, to bring about a moderate settlement with the much hated John Bull. Here Nevins tends to be a little hard on the erratic Sumner, in the spirit of "hands across the sea." He forgets the perfectly natural indignation felt by Americans at Britain's policy toward the Union, alternately crass and treacherous, almost comparable to that of Italy and Germany in the civil war now raging in Spain.

The many chapters on our external affairs appeal strongly enough through their authentic "atmosphere." But even more fascinating are the extensive passages in Fish's journals which comment upon the sensational internal events in which he played only an indirect or chiefly passive role. The lurid comedies of the Crédit Mobilier, the great Whiskey Frauds, the Belknap and Babcock affairs all live again in Fish's sober chronicle; and while there is nothing utterly new here, there is certainly some added light upon the mystery of Ulysses Grant himself. After studying the private soliloquies of Fish, who saw everything,who saw Grant striving to protect his criminal friends from the slow, cumbered arm of the law whenever it did reach out for them, one is convinced that Grant himself was personally honest. Removed from army headquarters, he was a simple, bewildered and childlike executive. Such men, of course, always manage to involve themselves in much bigger miseries and catastrophes than any knowing scoundrel could possibly devise.

Under another head, Fish's testimony strengthens the belief that the corruption of this day of new capitalism and national expansion was thoroughly systematic and integrated. Hence Fish remained silent, serving as a window front. He could have resigned, like Secretary Bristow or the two or three other honest men who blundered into the camp. He hung on for eight years—was it to "save Grant from himself" as Nevins suggests?

Much of Nevins' biography is made of familiar historical material; it has its *longeurs* because it is prolific of facts rather than ideas. Its original documents, however, are worth pausing over. They touch deeply upon the pathology of bourgeois politics in a crucial period of the national growth.

MATTHEW JOSEPHSON.

Foreshadows of the Present

The Right to Heresy: Castellio against Calvin, by Stefan Zweig. Translated by Eden and Cedar Paul. New York: The Viking Press. 238 pages. $3.

IT HAS been said that ideally history should be written "in the middle tone." Its best subjects are found therefore in the middle distance of the past, where the sources are still abundant and emotions cool enough to allow a dispassionate appraisal of the event. A tendencious and partisan historian will be well advised to make his case through subjects which lie in the middle distance and which can be treated in the middle tone. By so doing he is more likely to win consent to his theses, and having done so can double on the contemporary reader and say, "Thou art the man!"

These considerations plainly determined Stefan Zweig's choice of his present theme, which is a study of the duties and fortunes of a liberal humanist faced by a dictator. His hero is Castellio; his villain is Calvin. A third name is implicit in that tale, that of Miguel Servetus, who was burned alive for heresy at Champel, near Geneva, in 1553. Calvin was responsible for the execution, which Voltaire has called the first "religious murder" of the Reformation.

Zweig does not idealize Servetus. He sees in him an adventurer, at times something of the charlatan, a free-thinker of a desultory and superficial type. He does him the justice, however, of dignifying him in the hour of his death. Calvin comes off badly in the record and there is no

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reason why he should be let off lightly. The implacable quality of his mind, which enabled him to fabricate like a work of structural steel the theology which was to serve half the Protestant world for three hundred years, carried with it as a corollary unlovely and remorseless personal traits. No one has ever tried, and no one should try, to condone the execution of Servetus. It was a bad and cruel business which becomes intelligible only as we realize that to Calvin's fanatical mind heresy was something as concrete and deadly dangerous as typhus or the cholera. Zweig plainly regards Calvin as a pathological person, both a masochist and sadist.

Castellio stood in the tradition of Erasmus, a peace-loving scholar and a liberal human soul. The type is disinclined to action, but once it takes the field has a pitiless candor. Castellio as a lecturer in Geneva had run foul of Calvin and had been driven out of the city. He had found sanctuary in Basle. Calvin's half-hearted public apologia for the execution of Servetus roused Castellio's moral anger and he countered with a devastating *"Contra libellum Calvini."* This plea for tolerance and condemnation of intolerance is one of the world's historic briefs for liberalism. It furnishes Zweig with his text and thesis. Calvin had undoubtedly marked Castellio down for the end he had meted out to Servetus, but Basle was reluctant to hand him over to the Genevan executioner. Castellio's natural death—perhaps a happy death under the circumstances—deprived Calvin of his victim.

"Nostra res agitur," says Zweig. (The line from Horace reads *"tua res agitur."*) "It is our affair that is at stake." This book is a bold brief for liberalism, and an indictment of the dictator. We have here a dispassionate study, "in the middle tone," of the logic of dictatorships and a celebration of the "sacred stubbornness" of courageous humanism. "A dictatorship cannot everlastingly maintain its ruthless radicalism. . . . Dictators are but temporary forces; and what aspires to hedge the rhythm of life within a field of reaction, achieves its aim only for a season, to lead, then, to a more energetic escape." We may hope that Zweig's inference from the past is to hold true in the present.

W. L. SPERRY.

A Handbook for Marxists

The Theory and Practice of Socialism, by John Strachey. New York: Random House. 512 pages. $3.

IN THE English-speaking countries as well as elsewhere there has been a great need in recent years for a book that would persuasively summarize and synthesize in up-to-date terms the Marxist critique of capitalist civilization and at the same time correlate this with the actual achievements of socialism in the Soviet Union. For this important task Mr. John Strachey, in view of his former brilliant writings and especially "The Coming Struggle for Power," seemed admirably equipped. And indeed in "The Theory and Practice of Socialism" he has written the best and most useful book of this kind with which I am acquainted. But I am forced to add that it falls considerably short of the standards we have grown to expect from John Strachey.

For "The Theory and Practice of Socialism" is very uneven in respect to both literary style and the intellectual analysis of the various subjects treated. Here and there the well known Strachey prose—swift, incisive, moving—bursts forth in all its old-time vigor; but too often it is simply careless or pedestrian or unnecessarily redundant. Something of the same can be said about the quality of thought in this book. I get the impression that the job was done in a great hurry and never properly revised. Surely the scholar John Strachey could easily have ruled out such factual errors as stating that the CIO unions in America have been *expelled* from the A.F. of L. and that the new Soviet Constitution provides for freedom of religious *propaganda.* The extreme length of the volume, too (about a hundred pages more than either "The Coming Struggle for Power" or "The Nature of Capitalist Crisis"), is a serious handicap to that purpose of popularizing the principles of socialism which was one of the author's chief ideas in undertaking this work. And I believe that a discreet pruning knife would have been able to cut down the bulk of the book measurably without seriously curtailing its scope.

Mr. Strachey is at his best, I think, in the first part of the book when he makes his penetrating comparison of the actualities and possibilities of production and distribution as between chaotic capitalism and planned socialism. The part on the history of the working class is also excellently done, including a fresh and illuminating treatment of Robert Owen and the Chartists. Least convincing, though perhaps essentially the most difficult to clarify, are the discussions in the last section on Marxism as "The Science of Social Change," with separate chapters on such topics as Historical Materialism, Dialectical Materialism and the Law of Motion of Capitalism.

It seems to me that the author has given the devil more than his due by granting capitalism too much credit for what it has done. There is, in my opinion, an overemphasis on the "historical function" of the capitalist system, its mission of developing the technical and other resources of mankind with the maximum rapidity. Strachey sometimes gives the impression that only rather recently has it become time for capitalism to step out of the picture. But Marx and Engels thought it was time to get rid of capitalism almost ninety years ago, in 1848, when they issued their "Communist Manifesto." We can go further and suggest that once capitalism had developed to a substantial degree the factory system and the process of mechanical invention, it would have been desirable, regardless of how far politically possible, to establish a socialist system in the Western world. For, allowing full discount for the borrowing of foreign techniques, Soviet Russia has demonstrated, I believe, that a planned socialism can build up the productive resources of a country from something near scratch with more efficiency and less suffering than capitalism at any time.

These comments ought not to obscure how fully I recognize that a number of Mr. Strachey's troubles are due to the intrinsic difficulty of the subject matter and frequently of its traditional vocabulary. It is a most formidable task to make the average citizen in Anglo-Saxon countries realize that "proletarian dictatorship" and "workers' democracy" are not substantially different, that the abolition of "private property" does not mean the nationalization of automobiles and furniture, that the elimination of "the profit motive" does not imply absolute equality in wages, that advocacy of "revolution" does not entail favoring force and violence, and that "the withering away of the State" is not equivalent to complete anarchy in the realm of government. Some day, I am convinced, it will be worth while for Strachey and other Marxists to study more thoroughly the strategy of words and slogans. But whatever criticisms of this work may be valid, it should be stated that John Strachey has led the way to one of the most fundamental undertakings of our times, though the book I imagine he essentially intended still remains to be written.

CORLISS LAMONT.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Gentlemanly Essayist

Seven Years' Harvest, by Henry Seidel Canby. New York: Farrar and Rinehart. 320 pages. $2.50.

Forays and Rebuttals, by Bernard DeVoto. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. 417 pages. $3.

IT IS always questionable whether it isn't an unkindness to the casual essayist, or journalist-essayist, to collect in a book his random *aperçus* and marginalia—and when the essayist does it himself he must, of course, be fully aware that he is risking something very like suicide. For the random *aperçus* and marginalia, as they are dictated by time and circumstance, by what is new, or what is news, can have little in common except that they *are* news—beyond that, they share no center, have no principle, lie in no one focus; and to attempt to force them into some kind of systematic relationship or, that failing, into a kind of genial equanimity of tone, is almost inevitably to give the resulting book a kind of pseudo-unity which every so often will sound pretentious or false. Mr. Canby and Mr. DeVoto—the outgoing and incoming Box and Cox of The Saturday Review—have not, in their respective collections of essays, escaped this misfortune. Mr. Canby has been at some pains, in his "Seven Years' Harvest," to give his book unity by assuming that the particular seven years covered by his miscellaneous essays were particularly important ones, for this and that reason—he seems to imply that they were more than usually charged with fruitful changes and transitions, with endings and beginnings, and that perhaps the literary and artistic changes roughly, if not precisely, paralleled the sociological and economic fissures and stresses. That may or may not be so, and to work out such a thesis in detail might be very interesting indeed; but unfortunately it has not been Mr. Canby's aim to do so. He has merely hoped that in his *own* seven years of comment something of this pattern of evolution might a little more than fortuitously be evident. He covers a great deal of ground, by no means restricting himself to the merely literary—he gets as far afield as the nightingale, and angling—but for all that the effect remains random and idiosyncratic, and the pattern refuses to form. Idiosyncratic, because Mr. Canby very definitely belongs to the school of the gentleman's essay, his judgments are for the most part quite undisguisedly and frankly based on personal tastes and, if the first personal pronoun is not always actually on the printed page, it is always unmistakably present in the sound of Mr. Canby's voice. It is a charming enough voice, though perhaps a shade genteel; and a little too shrill, when Mr. Canby is angry, as he is with the hard-boiled school, and the psychoanalytic school, and the Hemingways and the Joyces, and the Melvilles and O'Neills. His preference is for Thornton Wilder and Robert Nathan—Moby Dick is just "a maze of words." Nevertheless, Mr. Canby is admirable on Thomas Wolfe, and on the autobiographical novel in general; and he has some excellent things to say about the future of realism.

Mr. DeVoto also belongs to the school of the gentlemanly essayist—though he might not like to be told so. "Tough guy's essays" might be his own term for these truculent and forthright papers, which range in subject from a study of the origin and evolution of the Mormon Utopia to appraisals of New England and culture and examinations of the theory of biography and criticism. In history, Mr. DeVoto wants us to remember—and very sensibly too—that we are dealing with a pluralistic world, about which it is is dangerous to dogmatize on restricted evidence. In biography, he wants us to stick to facts, and nothing but facts—just the documents, no guesswork, no psychoanalytical reconstruction or recreation or interpretation—which leaves just about nothing at all. (In this connection, Mr. DeVoto makes the dogmatic statement that "psychoanalysis cannot come into effective relationship, into any relationship, with a dead man." Which we modestly suggest just ain't true.) In criticism, he would like to see a sociological or functional check on esthetic and popular judgments, as on evolutions in taste or fashion—not an original idea, but worth saying often. In short, Mr. DeVoto *is* sensible, a lot of the time, but is inclined to be a little angry and repetitive about it, and a little too sure that nobody else is as sensible as himself. He thinks Mark Twain is the greatest literary artist America has produced, and he admires William Lyon Phelps. And like Mr. Canby—it seems to be a Saturday Review specialty—he is wholly admirable and delightful on Thomas Wolfe. CONRAD AIKEN.

The Newest Machiavelli

How to Run a War, by Bruce Winton Knight. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 246 pages. $2.

PROFESSOR Knight has written a complete Hoyle on the most spectacular of our national games. There are detailed instructions on "How to Get into a War," "How to Lie for Your Country," "How to Round Up the Victims," "How to Organize the Killing Business," "How to Compute the Dividends," etc. Obviously, this manual is not intended for the nobodies who do the actual fighting, but for the superior people who order the holocaust and conduct it. The author firmly disallows the claims of professors, preachers and mere government officials to chief honors in war-making and generously awards the palm to the Upper Classes, to whom his book is specifically addressed. They may be shy about the prominence that he has given them, but they should be grateful for the practical value of his directions.

Getting into war is not difficult. The basic elements are nationalism and profit-seeking, and there appears to be no shortage of these materials. Four steps follow in order: economic penetration, political intervention in the penetrated areas, balance-of-power struggle, and incidents, including *the* incident. Under the heading "How to Get into Somebody Else's War," the author explains the American method of "neutral rights." The proper procedure is to insist, as a matter of National Honor, on theoretical rights that are bound to be violated in practice. Preach political isolation but "denounce the economic isolation without which [it] is unworkable." Make the League weak by keeping out of it, and keep out of it because it is weak. If you waive neutral rights, "do it to the prejudice of one side." Professor Knight thinks that we can easily get into somebody else's war by these methods.

The principles and tactics of "patriotic truth-fixing" are carefully explained with hilarious examples. The section on "How to Kill People" is less amusing, but the author asserts that killing is not part of the ideal theory of war, though it's hard to eliminate in practice. The best weapons are discussed, and their effects are described with no nonsense. Special attention is given to killing civilians.

Professor Knight is not very helpful on how to make the next war lucrative. He gloomily suggests that "the destruction of an enemy's wealth impairs the chances of collecting wealth from an enemy." Borrowing money from your allies and leaving them with the bag is a popular method, but inadequate. He admits it is a moral duty to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

soak the poor "for being inferior," but if pressed too hard they may adopt an extreme form of non-coöperation. Besides, "you must still get most of the wealth from where most of it is."

Of course this sordid talk of profit does not apply to America. No less an authority than James E. Van Zandt recently asserted: "We [veterans] are ready to fight, if necessary, to convince other nations that our demands for peace must be respected." Even a pacifist should be willing to support a war waged in behalf of peace.

RALPH RUTENBER.

Synthetic Freedom

The Restoration of Property; An Essay on the Modern Crisis, by Hilaire Belloc. New York: Sheed and Ward. 144 pages. $1.50.

A FAIRLY superficial statement of Belloc's plans for giving political and economic direction to the "spirit of reaction" against "capitalism and its socialist fruit." A source-book for those who might be interested in tracing the full genealogy of the Jeffersonianism now advocated by our Southern agrarian school. Belloc is a kind of protectionist Adam Smith, with a patchwork scheme for putting security and laissez-faire together. Apparently, all that is needed is to pick the best features from two systems, and forget the worst. He believes that the historic process is taking capitalism toward fascism or communism (which, for him, are almost the same thing); he grants that "you cannot reverse the process without acting *against* natural economic tendencies"—hence he advocates a "reversal" or "reaction" by the deliberate governmental subsidizing of an independent middle class, a project for economic "reafforestation" by the federal planting of petty-bourgeois "seedlings." "Either we restore property or we restore slavery"—hence his speculations upon legal measures that would recreate a sufficient body of small landowners and independent craftsmen "to give their tone to the state." The rest of the populace could presumably enjoy the freedom of this class by proxy, as it got the spiritual advantage of sharing their "tone."

All that is necessary, to implement this "healthy" reactionary process, is to introduce the kind of laws that give small enterprise the advantage over large enterprise, in accordance with "the principle that everything should be done by the artifice of law to make it easy for the smaller man to buy land from the richer man and difficult for the larger man to buy land from the smaller man," a cute notion that would sound better if expressed in some of Belloc's delightful nonsense jingles and may indeed have derived originally from this topsy-turvy aspect of his genius. The scheme he offers is hung upon the pegs of peasantry, craft guild, universal church and a (beneficent) monarch. For each of these he substitutes an attenuated modern equivalent. The attenuations finally attain such ambiguity that this Catholic can frame his apologetics in the name of "liberty"—the basic slogan of the sinful when Catholicism was in its heyday. Perhaps the book should be of most interest to the students of logomachy, who would watch the ways in which the symbols of appeal are stolen back and forth by rival camps. And it must be conceded that recent laws against chain stores are somewhat in the spirit of Belloc's proposals, as are also the scattered "resettlement" projects instituted under Roosevelt. Everything depends upon how much importance you attach to this drop in the bucket.

KENNETH BURKE.

Being Dead Is Something

The Geographical History of America, or the Relation of Human Nature to the Human Mind, by Gertrude Stein. New York: Random House. 207 pages. $2.50.

THORNTON WILDER solemnly assures us in the introduction that this latest book by Gertrude Stein is a philosophical work treating of the differences between human nature and the human mind. True enough the words human nature and human mind occur in every other sentence, and the patient reader can extract a nebulous idea of what Miss Stein conceives to be the difference. But just what all this has to do with the geography of America is a mystery—and one not worth unraveling. The geography of America, it seems, is flat; and Miss Stein likes the human mind—or so she says—but gives little evidence of her regard for it. She seems to be deeply moved about it all, for she protests frequently that there are tears in her eyes.

I protest "with tears in my eyes" that the writer of "Melanctha" persists in handing us her experimental nonsense. Taking the broadest view possible of the value of experimentation in literature, it is still doubtful whether she has contributed anything valuable by her breaking down of language. Experimentation, if it is a breaking down, must lead to rebuilding with greater vigor and sureness. Otherwise it is a small boy's preoccupation with smells and explosions.

Are there still people who are impressed by the oracular—who really are so simple minded that they dare not challenge the unintelligible lest they show themselves unintelligent? Are there still any to do honor to the gibbering ghosts of a dead era? There is no value in this book unless we accept Miss Stein's statement that, "Being dead is not ending it is being dead and being dead is something."

MYRA MARINI.

Books in Brief

Shining Scabbard, by R. C. Hutchinson. New York: Farrar and Rinehart. $2.75.

IT HAS been suggested that literature is like science in that the discoveries of a great author can be passed on and become part of the general literary equipment. It seems more reasonable to suppose, however, that the methods of a great writer are inseparably connected with other qualities in his greatness, and that, when they are adopted by lesser men, they become mere devices. Mr. R. C. Hutchinson has learned much from his major contemporaries, but he remains a minor novelist. What he has attempted in "Shining Scabbard" is ambitious enough: the recapture of the atmosphere of pre-war France through the portrayal of a provincial family. And he knows all the tricks: the creation of a mood of tenseness and hysteria by the exaggeration of the characters' idiosyncracies; the arousing of the reader's imaginative participation through the withholding of details; the use of irony in the classic sense in the reference to historical events. Yet the total impression the novel makes is feeble, and separate scenes quickly fade from the mind.

Usually it is second-rate writers like Mr. Hutchinson who, by combining the suggestion of originality with actual superficiality, manage to capture large sales. My guess would be that Mr. Hutchinson had fallen between the two stools, but the Book of the Month Club seems to think differently.

G. H.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Life of Emmeline Pankhurst, by E. Sylvia Pankhurst. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 180 pages. $2.

TO READ this book is to recapture, in some degree, the heroic days of the English suffrage struggle. In this struggle Mrs. Pankhurst and her daughters were preëminent and inspired leaders. Writing with admirable lucidity of the complex English politics involved, Miss Pankhurst makes eminently clear the desperate courage of the suffragettes, the cynical brutality and bad faith of the government opposition, the political sagacity of the suffrage leaders and the class limitations by which some of them were hampered. The writer was not one of these. She and her younger sister, Adela, alone of their family followed their radicalism to its logical conclusion. Mrs. Pankhurst herself, the brilliant, generous, magnetic leader, the early liberal and Fabian Socialist, was at the end of her life a tory. During the War she was an ardent recruiter, repudiated her pacifist daughters and even in 1918 sailed on a government mission to urge Japanese military intervention in Russia. "To me it appears a tragic anti-climax," says the writer. "Yet no candid account of her life can fail to state the fact." Miss Pankhurst's account is eminently candid and fair and the figure that emerges from it is still that of a great woman and a great leader. M. G.

Rose Deeprose, by Sheila Kaye-Smith. New York: Harper and Brothers. $2.50.

This book is a study in sanity. Rose Deeprose's life was beset with complication, laden with tragedy. She loved three people—her mother, her light enchanting friend Christine, her mentally afflicted little girl; and through her, through flare-ups of rashness in her steadiness, these three were brought to death. For the child's death Rose was tried for murder and, as an indirect result of the scandal, her husband shot himself. Yet the response of her nature to experience was so true that shock and grief made her more able to love freely and wisely. Sheila Kaye-Smith has written a story of "the plain things all plain people know" movingly and with great certainty. The rhythm of her characters' lives is felt and conveyed as part of a life she knows so well that she gives it to the reader for his own. S. J. R.

Contributors

EDMUND WILSON'S most recent book was "Travels in Two Democracies," published last summer by Harcourt, Brace.

CHARLES A. BEARD has written many books and articles on history, government and economics. His most recent book is "The Discussion of Human Affairs."

PEARL S. BUCK, the daughter of a Fundamentalist missionary, is the author of "The Good Earth" and other novels. In December she published "Fighting Angel," a biographical study of her father.

JOSEPHINE MILES is writing on the language of poetry as part of her work toward a Ph.D. at the University of California.

MATTHEW JOSEPHSON is the author of "The Robber Barons" and biographies of Zola and Rousseau, and is now at work on a new book.

W. L. SPERRY is the dean of the Theological School at Harvard.

CORLISS LAMONT, author of "The Illusion of Immortality," is on the editorial board of The Marxist Quarterly. He edited the anthology, "Man Answers Death," published last fall by Putnam.

CONRAD AIKEN has recently returned to this country after several years spent in England. Scribner's last fall published a collection of his recent poems under the title of "Time in the Rock."

RALPH RUTENBER is the senior master at the Wooster School.

KENNETH BURKE, who was one of the editors of The Dial, is the author of several books, including "Permanence and Change" in the New Republic Dollar Series, and is now working on "Attitudes Toward History."

MYRA MARINI lives in New York City. Her verse and prose have appeared in Poetry, Story, The New Masses and other magazines.

The initials signed to the brief reviews are those of Granville Hicks, Martha Gruening and Stella J. Roof.

SEE RUSSIA
WITH
Jerome Davis
Leader of the
FIFTH RUSSIAN SEMINAR
SUMMER OF 1937
•
For information write to
BUREAU OF UNIVERSITY TRAVEL
54 Boyd Street Newton, Mass.

TREE-RIPENED INDIAN RIVER
Oranges and Grapefruit
Direct from our grove to you
55 lb. Basket—$3.25
We pay express east of Mississippi.
Satisfaction and safe arrival guaranteed
Write for price list and folder
T. R. INDIAN RIVER ORANGE CO.
Cocoa, Pa.
Our 10th Year—Serving 8,000 Customers

LECTURES

SCOTT NEARING, every WEDNESDAY EVENING, WORLD SURVEY TALK, Irving Plaza, 15th Street and Irving Place. 8:30 P. M. Admission 35c.

EAT STRAWBERRIES AND LIKE IT, a lecture on advertising by HELEN WOODWARD, author of Three Flights Up. Monday evening, January 18, 8:30 o'clock. Auspices League of American Writers. MID-TOWN MUSIC HALL, 159 West 49th Street. Admission 35c.

Spectacular
LENIN MEMORIAL PAGEANT
COMMUNIST PARTY • NEW YORK STATE
MADISON SQUARE GARDEN
WEDNESDAY 8 P.M. JANUARY 20th AUSPICES
ADMISSION 40c RESERVED SEATS $1.00
Dramatic

RESORT

REBECCA SILVER Invites You to
FOREST HOUSE at INTERLAKEN
on Lake Mahopac
most picturesque spot in Putnam County. Excellent Cuisine. All outdoor sports. 50 miles from N. Y. Moderate rates. Open all year.
Lake Mahopac, N. Y. Mahopac, 688 or 977

RECORDS

ANNOUNCING AN EXTRAORDINARY SALE
100,000 PARLOPHONE, Odeon, Decca discs. These marvelous European recordings comprise the cream of the world's finest music. A selection to gratify every taste. Sale prices: 50c and 75c per record. Values $1.50 and $2.00. Mail orders. Catalog.
GRAMOPHONE SHOP, Inc., 18 East 48th St., N. Y.

CORRESPONDENCE CLUBS

CONTACTS, the Clearing House for the mentally insolated, connects you with 2,000 members the world over. Now in its 10th year. Unusual books loaned free. Send 3c stamp. **Box 91 Station D, New York City.**

THE FRIENDSHIP CLUB, Box 670, Seattle, Washington, welcomes the lonely in the small town and in the large city. Postage—please.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED